



During Travel Smartphone Usage Among Gen Z Muslim Travelers: An Interpretative Phenomenology Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The increasing popularity of halal tourism and the dominance of Gen Z in travel, particularly in Indonesia, highlight the need to understand the behavior of these young Muslim travelers. The study aims to investigate the influence of smartphone technology on travel behavior in halal destinations. The research employs Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) through in-depth interviews and observations of Gen Z Muslim travelers using smartphones during their trips. The findings reveal that smartphones serve multiple purposes for these travelers. They are used to capture and share travel memories, fulfill religious needs like prayer times and finding mosques, and assist in discovering new destinations and planning travel logistics. The study concludes that smartphones have become an integral part of the travel experience for Gen Z Muslim travelers in halal destinations, serving both practical and religious purposes. The implications suggest that halal tourism destinations should recognize and accommodate the needs of these young travelers by providing facilities and services that support optimal smartphone usage, such as reliable internet access and charging points. By doing so, these destinations can enhance the overall travel experience and cater to the preferences of this influential demographic.

Keywords: halal tourism, muslim travelers, gen Z, travel behavior, religious needs.

INTRODUCTION

Halal tourism is becoming increasingly popular, along with the interest of Muslim tourists who are increasingly interested in international travel.¹ Muslim-friendly tourism contributes 10.40% to global GDP and is the sector with the fifth largest economic value after finance, food, fashion, and media.² Muslim travelers'

¹ Sulaiman Ainin dkk., "Sentiment analyses of multilingual tweets on halal tourism," *Tourism Management Perspectives* 34, no. January 2019 (2020): 100658, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2020.100658>.

² State of the Global Islamic Economy Report, "State of the Global Islamic Economy Report 2019/20," *Dubai International Financial Centre*, 2019, 1-174, <https://cdn.salaamgateway.com/special-coverage/sgie19-20/full-report.pdf>.

spending increased from US\$58 billion to US\$102 billion in 2021 and is expected to grow by 50.0% in 2022 to US\$154 billion and reach US\$189 billion by 2025 at a 4-year CAGR of 16.5%. International Muslim tourist arrivals grew steadily from around 108 million in 2013 to 160 million in 2019. Although in 2020, the arrival of Muslim tourists decreased by 42 million tourists, it is predicted that the arrival of Muslim tourists will be able to reach as many as 26 million tourists and will recover by 80% in 2023³. According to the Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy/Head of the Tourism and Creative Economy Agency, Sandiaga Salahuddin Uno, halal tourism focuses on additional services, especially for Muslim tourists when traveling, by carrying out three concepts, namely: Good to Have, Nice to Have, and Must to Have which are described into five main components of Muslim-friendly tourism / halal tourism, namely halal hotels, halal transport, halal food, halal tour packages, and halal finance.⁴ Internationally, Muslim tourists who travel a lot are, on average, 24 years old and have a good level of education (Indonesian Ministry of Tourism, 2018). Around 60% of Muslim travelers consist of Millennials and Gen Z.⁵ This large, young, and rapidly growing demographic of global Muslims is one of the driving forces for the growth of the Islamic market.⁶ In Indonesia, Gen Z is a generation of age groups born between 1997 and 2012 with the largest population compared to other generation groups.⁷ In general, most Gen Z travel domestically compared to international travel, as can be seen from the visits of domestic tourists, which are dominated by Gen Z tourists or the age group of 25 years and under by reaching 41.91 percent compared to the millennial generation or the age group of 25-34 years which reached 38.20 percent in 2020.⁸

Gen Z is a generation called the digital generation or digital native. It was born in the digital era and is open and easily adaptable to new technology.⁹ This digital native generation is divided into two: the first, born between 1983 and

³ Mastercard-CrescentRating, "Global Muslim Travel Index," 2021.

⁴ Dadan Kuswaraharja, "NTB Jadi Model Pengembangan Wisata Ramah Muslim Indonesia," *Travel.detik.com*, 2022, <https://travel.detik.com/travel-news/d-5921419/ntb-jadi-model-pengembangan-wisata-ramah-muslim-indonesia>.

⁵ Indonesia Muslim Travel Index (IMTI), "Mastercard-CrescentRating," *Senin 8 April 2019 Puku 19.16 Wib*, no. April (2019): 1-48, <https://www.crescentrating.com/reports/indonesia-muslim-travel-index-2019.html>.

⁶ Yenal Yagmur, Rüya Ehtiyar, dan Akin Aksu, "Evaluation of halal tourism in terms of bibliometric characteristics," *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 2019, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-05-2019-0101>.

⁷ Badan Pusat Statistik, "Hasil Sensus Penduduk 2020," *Berita Resmi Statistik*, no. 27 (2021): 1-52.

⁸ BPS Provinsi Nusa Tenggara Barat, "Statistik Daerah Provinsi Nusa Tenggara Barat" (Mataram, 2021).

⁹ Aysen Temel Eginli dan Selda Isik, "Generational differences In digital age a research on technology experiences of generations," *International Journal of Scientific and Technology Research* 9, no. 2 (2020): 3150-54.

1990, and the second, born between 1990 and now.¹⁰ Generation Z is considered a true Digital Native because it was born and grew along with the emergence and development of internet technology in the 1990s and digital transformation in the 2000s (Gopal et al., 2019; Seymour, 2019). This generation is always connected to the internet network and social networks.¹¹ A survey conducted by Rosselló, Expedia Inc., and Expedia Group found that the average Gen Z spends over five hours using smartphones and social media, an essential communication tool.¹² That survey shows that 50 percent of Gen Z users use social media such as Twitter, Snapchat, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.¹³ This social media dramatically influences them to see promotions, photos, or travel videos shared by friends and professionals. The rapid development of digital technology has provided significant changes to the tourism industry, especially to tourist behavior throughout the travel process, before (Pre-consumption), while in tourist destinations (Consumption), and after travel (post-consumption).¹⁴ Digital technology is an electronic device, system, and resource that generates, stores, or processes data like social media and smartphones.¹⁵ This technology positively influences tourism by facilitating tourists' wants and needs.¹⁶ Communication and information technology are two technologies that affect tourism. Information Technology is one of the fields widely explored in tourism because information is the life of the tourism industry.¹⁷

Indonesia is the fourth largest country with internet and smartphone users worldwide, with 171.26 million internet users and 160.23 million smartphone

¹⁰ Ellen Johanna Helsper dan Rebecca Eynon, "Digital natives: Where is the evidence?," *British Educational Research Journal* 36, no. 3 (2010): 503–20, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01411920902989227>.

¹¹ Christina K. Dimitriou dan Emad AbouElgheit, "Understanding generation Z's social decision-making in travel," *Tourism and Hospitality Management* 25, no. 2 (2019): 311–34, <https://doi.org/10.20867/thm.25.2.4>.

¹² Verónica Rosselló, Expedia Inc., dan Expedia Group, "a Look Ahead : How Younger Generations Are," 2018, 1–24, https://info.advertising.expedia.com/hubfs/Content_Docs/Rebrand-2018/20180829_Millennials_boomers.pdf?hsCtaTracking=ba58817b-61d6-414e-a056-de3aaf644e70%7Ce5a5965c-9a8a-426a-b286-ec1d25cfdeb1%0Ahttps://info.advertising.expedia.com/hubfs/Content_Docs/Rebra.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Ulrike Gretzel, "The Transformation of Consumer Behaviour," in *Tourism Business Frontiers* (Elsevier, 2006), 9–18, <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-7506-6377-9.50009-2>.

¹⁵ Victoria State Government, "Teach with digital technologies," <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/>, 2019, [https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/digital/Pages/teach.aspx#:~:text=Digital technologies are electronic tools, across all curriculum learning areas](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/digital/Pages/teach.aspx#:~:text=Digital%20technologies%20are%20electronic%20tools,across%20all%20curriculum%20learning%20areas).

¹⁶ David Glen Mick dan Susan Fournier, "Paradoxes of technology: Consumer cognizance, emotions, and coping strategies," *Journal of Consumer Research* 25, no. 2 (1998): 123–43, <https://doi.org/10.1086/209531>.

¹⁷ Dimitrios Buhalis, "Strategic use of information technologies in the tourism industry," *Tourism Management* 19, no. 5 (Oktober 1998): 409–21, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177\(98\)00038-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177(98)00038-7).

users.¹⁸ According to a survey conducted by Kemp in 2022 show that the most digital devices owned by Indonesians (aged between 16-64 years) are mobile phones (96.1%), of which are smartphones as much as 96.0%, followed by computer or laptop devices (68.7%).¹⁹ Kemp also found that active internet users in Indonesia in January 2022 amounted to 204.7 million users or 73.7 percent of Indonesia's population, while the number of people who did not use the internet was 73.05 million or 26.3 percent. A total of 370.1 million mobile phones in Indonesia are connected to the network, which means that as many as 94.1% of the Indonesian population accesses the internet using their mobile phones. Among these internet users, as many as 40.3 percent of the Indonesian population uses the internet to learn about places and travel. Online search behavior is dominated by searches through conventional search sites (99.2%) and using social media as the primary source to research brands (65.5%).²⁰ This increase in the use of the internet and smartphones can significantly influence daily life, which also affects the behavior of its use when traveling.²¹ The Covid-19 pandemic also drives the increase in the use of digital technology.²² The pandemic has caused behavior changes, including the increasing use of digital technology, such as social media; changes in mobility patterns, especially in transportation; changes in purchasing behavior that are more likely to be Online, and so on.²³ This behavior change also impacts media consumption and internet usage globally, including the increasing use of online communication services such as WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger, the use of more extended time to use social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and others, and creative content creation on social media such as TikTok.²⁴

Digital technology and ICT that are most widely used by tourists on this tour are smartphones because they are portable, connected to the internet, and have a large selection of essential applications that are very helpful when

¹⁸ Statista, "Number of smartphone users worldwide from 2016 to 2021 (in billions)," *Statista.com* 2021 (2019): 1, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/330695/number-of-smartphone-users-worldwide/>.

¹⁹ Simon Kemp, "DIGITAL 2022: INDONESIA," *Datareportal.Com*, 2022, <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2022-indonesia>.

²⁰ Kemp.

²¹ Dan Wang, Zheng Xiang, dan Daniel R. Fesenmaier, "Smartphone Use in Everyday Life and Travel," *Journal of Travel Research* 55, no. 1 (19 Januari 2016): 52-63, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287514535847>.

²² Yusuf, "Pandemi Covid-19 Pacu Adaptasi Gunakan Teknologi Digital," *Kominfo*, 2021, https://www.kominfo.go.id/content/detail/32602/pandemi-covid-19-pacu-adaptasi-gunakan-teknologi-digital/0/berita_satker.

²³ Mahesh H Puttaiah, Aakash Kiran Raverkar, dan Evangelos Avramakis, "All change: how COVID-19 is transforming consumer behaviour," *Swiss Re Institute*, 2020, <https://www.swissre.com/institute/research/topics-and-risk-dialogues/health-and-longevity/covid-19-and-consumer-behaviour.html>.

²⁴ Statistica, "In-home media consumption due to the coronavirus outbreak among internet users worldwide as of March 2020, by country," *Statista*, 18 Juni 2020, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1106498/home-media-consumption-coronavirus-worldwide-by-country/>.

traveling, such as information, communication, navigation, and documentation. According to a report by Dennis Schaal in 2022, there are ten most downloaded applications related to travel globally, namely navigation applications, namely Google Maps and Google Earth; online booking applications, namely, booking.com; online transportation applications, namely Uber, Didi, Bolt, Where My Train and Grab, and accommodation booking applications namely Airbnb.²⁵ Research conducted by Wang et al. in 2016 found that this smartphone is used to carry out communication, and social activities, get information and entertainment, and facilitate tourists related to tourism activities such as payments or writing lists of activities.²⁶ Several studies have been conducted on the use of smartphones in tourism. Among them is a study conducted by Liberato et al. in 2019, which shows that this technology has a significant influence on Gen Z in Porto to plan trips, especially when choosing tourist destinations;²⁷ Research was also conducted by Bhati et al. in 2019 on the use of smartphones and their applications that have a significant effect on improving the tourist experience when traveling;²⁸ exploration of teen travelers' experiences of smartphone use on vacation;²⁹ research to see the disadvantages and advantages of using smartphones when traveling;³⁰ the use and impact of smartphones during travel;³¹ the use of smartphones in daily life and during tourist trips;³² and decision-making while in tourist destinations mediated by the use of smartphones.³³ Berakon et al. conducted Research on technology related to halal tourism in 2021.³⁴ They examined the factors that influence interest in using halal

²⁵ Dennis Schaal, "Google Maps Tops in 2021 as Most-Downloaded Travel App," 2022, <https://skift.com/2022/01/10/google-maps-tops-as-most-downloaded-travel-app-in-2021/>.

²⁶ Wang, Xiang, dan Fesenmaier, "Smartphone Use in Everyday Life and Travel."

²⁷ Pedro Liberato dkk., "Generation Z and the Technology Use During a Trip," in *Advances in Intelligent Systems and Computing*, vol. 930 (Springer Verlag, 2019), 77–90, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-16181-1_8.

²⁸ Abhishek Bhati dkk., "The use of smartphones in enhancing the travel experience of young adults in Singapore," in *2019 International Conference on Contemporary Computing and Informatics (IC3I)* (IEEE, 2019), 186–91, <https://doi.org/10.1109/IC3I46837.2019.9055587>.

²⁹ Michaela Allaby dan Charlene S. Shannon, "I just want to keep in touch': Adolescents' experiences with leisure-related smartphone use," *Journal of Leisure Research* 51, no. 3 (2020): 245–63, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00222216.2019.1672506>.

³⁰ N.R.N.A. Rashid, C Wangbenmad, dan K A Mansor, "Managershalal Tourism:Of Non-Muslimlessons majorityfor Destinationcountries," *International Journal of Business and Society* 21, no. 1 (2020): 473–90, <https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85085196839&partnerID=40&md5=8b1b973f5f013804dbd91f8277690f9b>.

³¹ Dan Wang, Zheng Xiang, dan Daniel R. Fesenmaier, "Adapting to the mobile world: A model of smartphone use," *Annals of Tourism Research* 48 (2014): 11–26, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2014.04.008>.

³² Wang, Xiang, dan Fesenmaier, "Smartphone Use in Everyday Life and Travel."

³³ Xuerui Liu, Dan Wang, dan Ulrike Gretzel, "On-site decision-making in smartphone-mediated contexts," *Tourism Management* 88, no. April 2021 (2022): 104424, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2021.104424>.

³⁴ Izra Berakon dkk., "An expansion of the technology acceptance model applied to the halal tourism sector," *Journal of Islamic Marketing* 14, no. 1 (22 September 2023): 289–316, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-03-2021-0064>.

digital application technology, especially applications related to Islamic mobile banking.³⁵

The key to the success of the tourism industry lies in quickly identifying consumer needs and how to reach potential clients with comprehensive, personalized, and up-to-date information.³⁶ This technological transformation is believed to be the key to restoring the tourism industry's potential during the COVID-19 pandemic.³⁷ A technological transformation or innovation will fail if it is not consumer-oriented.³⁸ The need for this technology will significantly impact Gen Z, who will be the primary decision-makers when traveling in the next 10-15 years. Understanding the behavior of smartphone users, which is closely related to Gen Z as a Digital Generation, is necessary because developing this technology is essential in improving the tourist experience when traveling.³⁹ The development of digital technology in the tourism sector, mediated by the existence of smartphones,⁴⁰ cannot be developed without an analysis of Muslim tourist behavior, in this case, in the context of young Muslim tourists in Indonesia. Based on previous research, Vargas-Sánchez and Moral-Moral found that within the academic field, there has been no research analyzing the role of intelligent technology in halal tourism, which is also one of the unexplored fields.⁴¹ As far as the data obtained by researchers, research related to the use of digital technology, namely smartphones and applications related to travel in halal tourist destinations with the context of Gen Z Muslim tourists in Indonesia, has not been widely carried out, ranging from the ease and usability factors in meeting tourist needs to how this technology can meet the needs of tourists, especially the religious needs of Muslim tourists when traveling such as searching prayer place (mosque), reading digital Quran, and prayer reminders. Then, to be able to develop innovative technology that can improve the experience of Muslim tourists to support halal tourism, it takes interpretation of the tourist experience of users of innovation and digital technology through smartphones, including through the direct perspective of tourists who are one of the most generations who travel at this time, namely Generation Z. This research focuses on understanding the influence of smartphone digital technology on the behavior of generation Z Muslim tourists in Indonesia when traveling in tourist

³⁵ Berakon dkk.

³⁶ Buhalis, "Strategic use of information technologies in the tourism industry."

³⁷ UNWTO, "Global Guidelines to Restart Tourism," *Tourism and COVID-19 Priorities for Tourism Recovery*, no. May (2020): 1-29, <https://webunwto.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2020-05/UNWTO-Global-Guidelines-to-Restart-Tourism.pdf>.

³⁸ Neil Rackham, "From experience: Why bad things happen to good new products," *Journal of Product Innovation Management* 15, no. 3 (1998): 201-7, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1540-5885.1530201>.

³⁹ Bhati dkk., "The use of smartphones in enhancing the travel experience of young adults in Singapore."

⁴⁰ Liu, Wang, dan Gretzel, "On-site decision-making in smartphone-mediated contexts."

⁴¹ Moral-Moral M Vargas-Sánchez A., "Halal tourism: literature review and experts' view" 11, no. 3 (2019).

destinations. This study seeks to fill the gap from previous studies using interpretative phenomenology analysis methodology, which is flexible, detailed, and rich in analyzing the behavior of smartphone use by Gen-Z Muslim travelers when traveling.

METHODS

This research uses an Interpretative Phenomenology Analysis approach whose main objective is to obtain rich, detailed experiences and phenomena through a first-person perspective. In a theoretical position, Interpretative Phenomenology Analysis (IPA) aims to explore in detail the life experiences of participants and how they understand their personal experiences.⁴² In this study, data was collected through a semi-structured, in-depth interview method so researchers could directly understand the meaning conveyed by participants through Zoom Online. Participant observation through analysis analyzed participants' social media posts related to tourist trips made in halal tourist destinations, as well as direct messages via WhatsApp application if there are themes that need to be deepened outside the interview. Participants in this study consisted of eight Gen Z Muslim tourists who traveled to Lombok tourist destinations.

Table 1. Research participants

No	Pseudonim Name	Age	Region	Travel frequency
1.	Aziz	27	Lombok Tengah	High
2.	Rima	25	Lombok Timur	Moderate
3.	Ismi	28	Surabaya	Low
4.	Ojan	27	Lombok Timur	High
5.	Muna	22	Batam	Moderate
6.	Dewi	24	Jakarta	Low
7.	Andi	26	Sumbawa	Moderate
8.	Jes	28	Mataram	High

In this study, there is no explicit distinction between key informants and supporting informants. All participants are considered to possess equally valuable experiences and perspectives regarding the use of smartphones during halal tourism trips. The research employs purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique where participants are selected based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. The criteria used in this study include being a Gen Z Muslim tourist and having traveled in Lombok. Thus, the researchers deliberately chose participants who fulfilled both criteria to gain in-depth insights into how Gen Z Muslim tourists utilize their smartphones during their travels in halal tourism destinations.

⁴² Igor Pietkiewicz dan Jonathan A Smith, "A practical guide to using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis in qualitative research psychology," *Czasopismo Psychologiczne Psychological Journal* 20, no. 1 (2014), <https://doi.org/10.14691/cppj.20.1.7>.

Lombok was chosen because it is Indonesia's best halal tourist destination and has received several awards for world halal tourism. This study's data analysis used steps Smith et al. recommended: reading and re-reading, making initial notes, developing emergent themes, looking for connections across emerging themes, moving to the next case, and looking for cross-case patterns.⁴³ This study uses computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) Nvivo 12 Pro to help manage and encode data.

This study employs method triangulation, incorporating multiple data collection methods to ensure the validity and reliability of findings. Specifically, it combines semi-structured in-depth interviews via Zoom Online to delve into participants' experiences and interpretations regarding smartphone usage during travels, participant observation through analysis of social media posts related to their halal tourism trips, and direct messaging via WhatsApp for clarification and further exploration of emerging themes. This methodological triangulation enables a richer and more comprehensive understanding of how Gen Z Muslim tourists use smartphones. Interviews provide direct insights into experiences and interpretations, while social media observation and messaging offer additional context and validate interview findings. This combination of methods helps mitigate potential biases and enhances the overall credibility of the research.

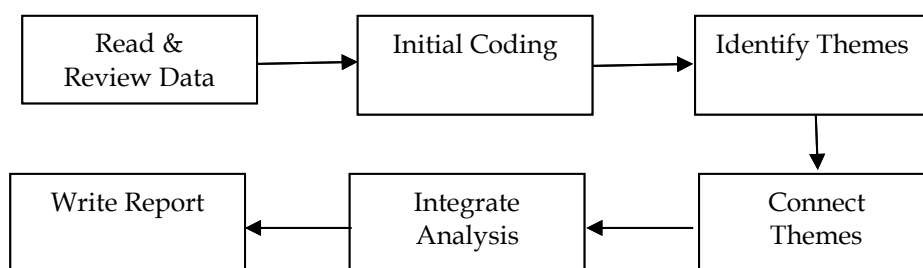


Figure 1. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis Step⁴⁴

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The analysis's results found four main themes (super-ordinate): smartphones as a tool to facilitate travel, smartphones as a tool to support religious needs, and smartphones as a tool to complement psychological needs when traveling.

⁴³ J A Smith, P Flowers, dan M Larkin, *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: Theory, Method and Research*, *QMiP Bulletin*, vol. 1 (SAGE Publications, 2010), <https://doi.org/10.53841/bpsqmip.2010.1.10.44>.

⁴⁴ Smith, Flowers, dan Larkin.

Table 2. Super-ordinate and Sub-ordinate Themes

Tema Super-ordinate	Tema Subordinate
Capture moments Devices	Digital Documentation Vlogging Digital Journaling
Religious assistant device	Reading Quran Determining the direction of prayer Digital prayer alerts Mobile mosque locators
New Experiences Explorer device	Destination Exploration Mobile navigation assistance
Multi-purpose device	Mobile communication Mobile booking and payment Smartphone-assisted travel decision-making Smartphone-based travel entertainment

Capture moments Devices

Participants interpret their smartphones as a tool to capture moments because they consider every trip they take to give meaning to them. Participant 1 likes challenges and tourist destinations he has never visited. So that the moment when he reaches the top or the moment when he reaches a goal that requires much effort, the moment is impossible for him to miss without capturing it using his smartphone to capture images and videos so that the moment can also be shared with his friends through his social media.

Digital Documentation

Smartphones are an essential tool for travelers to capture these precious moments because when they travel, they want to enjoy tourist destinations and their self-achievement. As he expressed,

"The use of smartphones when traveling can be used to capture moments, of course, yes, so emh. There are two typical trips to travel, some just enjoy and not capture, and I am one of those who enjoy and capture, because in my opinion such moments must be captured, and yes one of the media that I use is a smartphone to capture that moment" (Aziz).

Participant 5 revealed that every time he goes anywhere, his smartphone is essential because it can be a tool to document or record his activities. At the same time, traveling is also considered an essential moment in his life. "Wherever we go, documentation is essential as the best album moment in life." The documentation they do proves that they have traveled to a destination/to be able to share the experience with their friends and family.

Vlogging

At this time, all generations, including Generation Z, will not miss the moment of travel, which is one of the special moments for them. So, they share their experiences through words or ordinary social media and create video blogs. In addition to documenting the moment, the Vlog can provide income for them through advertising, endorsement, or personal documentation.

Digital Journaling

Smartphones have essential features for writing notes. Rima, who often travels on the sidelines of her profession as a journalist, uses this smartphone to make small notes, which are further developed, and uploads her travel notes (blog) using a laptop. "If you use the most Rima smartphone, what should be or for example, I want to post on Instagram, on social media, I took notes in cellphone notes, Rima re-read it if it can definitely be up, then Rima post, most for notes that are just a little, if on the blog, it must be even longer, sir." (Rima).

Devices to assist religious needs while traveling

While traveling, participants interpret this smartphone as a tool to make it easier for them to worship, such as installing a prayer time reminder application, looking for Qibla directions, finding the nearest prayer place, or reading the Quran. To find halal food, they do not need to use smartphones because they feel that almost all food in Lombok is made by Muslims, so they feel safe eating it.

Participants interpret this smartphone as a tool to make it easier for them to worship while traveling. For example, they can install a prayer time reminder application, look for Qibla directions, find the nearest prayer place, or read the Quran. They do not need to use smartphones to find halal food because they feel that almost all food in Lombok is made by Muslims, so they feel safe eating it.

Reading the Quran

The activity of participant 1, who likes to travel to hilly or mountainous areas, makes it rather difficult to bring the Quran that he can read on the sidelines of his activities in tourist destinations; with the smartphone, he can read the Quran on the sidelines of his activities or after praying on the sidelines of his travel activities.

"People do not want to carry the Quran if they want to carry it anywhere, but maybe in a situation, people do not carry bags, for example, they only bring smartphones, but they can use it like to read the Quran while waiting for a next prayer in someplace or somewhere, they can use smartphone access to read digital Quran." (Aziz)

Determining the direction of prayer

When doing this tour, participant 1 had a tourist preference for remote mountainous or hilly areas, so it took much work to determine the direction of Qibla. Although he can pray facing any direction when he is in a place where it is difficult to determine the direction of Qibla, this smartphone helps him to determine the direction of prayer or Qibla using the compass found on the smartphone. "For example, rich people can determine the direction of prayer, and qibla can use the compass on the smartphone as well." (Aziz)

Digital prayer alerts

In the hills or the mountains far from residential areas, participant 1 rarely listens to the call to prayer, so to find out the prayer time, the smartphone helps him as a prayer time information tool so that he can pray according to his time. "To find information on today's prayer schedule, what time is it, like that, usually

we often googling it, for example, we do not know the time to pray or whatever, so we are rich when we have the schedule so that we can prepare faster." (Aziz)

New Experiences Explorer device

This smartphone is also interpreted as a tool to find new experiences, such as looking for new tourist destinations or routes to get to destinations they have visited. This smartphone helps them visit new destinations because the map feature allows them to get to their destination even if they have never had experience there before. In addition, smartphones are essential for finding information and inspiration for exciting tourist destinations.

Destination Exploration

Jessa uses her smartphone to find exciting tourist sites in the nearest area of her residence using Google Maps. After she uses the keyword "nearby tourist locations," the application provides recommendations for several nearby tourist locations along with photos of good locations from her own Google Maps that do mapping and users who upload their photos and reviews on Google Maps about these tourist destinations. "Yes, it is also true. For example, in my location in Mataram, sometimes on Maps, several of the nearest tourist locations will appear. We click on one of them, and there are more photos about the tourist location, so we would like to check that too." This smartphone is helpful for Participant 8, especially when finding new tourist destinations. "Especially to find new locations" (Jessa).

Mobile navigation assistance

For Participant 1, who often explores new destinations, this smartphone is beneficial in exploring new destinations. It can also help others to explore the new destination with a different route so that others can follow the trail he has left behind and want to try to explore the destination with that route without getting lost because usually, the instructions from Google Maps do not provide very detailed information primarily, new destinations that the general public may not have touched.

Smartphones can also assist others when we explore tourist destinations. This way, the route we take is documented, and we can share it with other travelers. When they visit the attractions we've been to, they can easily follow our recorded path, helping them avoid getting lost like we did.⁴⁵

Multi-purpose devices

Smartphones are versatile tools that make it easy for travelers to travel from the beginning of their journey until they return home. A smartphone is a tool to support all the needs of participants while traveling, such as Mobile communication, getting the cheapest accommodation and transportation prices, Online payment and booking, and communicating and entertaining.

Mobile communication

In traveling, especially traveling with a group (group traveling), communication tools are essential to maintain communication with each other,

⁴⁵ Aziz, Interview.

such as knowing each other's position or asking for help to bring or buy something on the trip, as expressed by Aziz, "Communication tools are also that important yes, so when we, one, when we go wrong... Groups usually yes, some buy gasoline, some buy food maybe we do not know that, eh don't tell each other when in a vehicle, so this smartphone can be an alternative for communication with each other, making it easier" (Aziz). Maintaining communication is very important for a traveler who loves adventure, as it helps avoid unwanted things such as punctured tires far from the nearest repair shop.

Smartphone-assisted travel decision-making

According to Aziz, this smartphone helps him to find accommodation around tourist destinations because he often comes down from the mountain at night, so he is unlikely to ask residents, and as for being able to ask residents, the information is considered less detailed, both location information, prices and so on. Using this smartphone, he can choose accommodation that suits his budget and knows the location of the inn, so he can also inform the direction and location of the inn he will go to the transportation driver he hires.

When choosing accommodation, smartphones are very helpful. Often, we might not know what lodging options are available nearby. For example, when visiting Sembalun, it usually gets dark quickly after descending from Mount Rinjani. At that time, asking locals for information often yields only general details rather than specifics. Once we identify our destination, we can use a motorcycle taxi to get there. Our smartphones can help us find the nearest lodging options and ensure they fit within our budget.⁴⁶

Mobile booking and payment

Jessa uses a smartphone at a tourist destination to make payments for accommodation or lodging. "If the place of lodging is like paying for a hotel, I prefer to use a smartphone, I pay via mobile banking" (Jessa).

Making reservations and payments online is common in their daily activities, so they like tourist destinations that provide services related to these payments. This indicates that tourist destinations must be able to maximize the needs of Gen-Z tourists so that Gen-Z Muslim tourists feel comfortable and easy in carrying out their tourist activities, thus encouraging them to travel back to these tourist destinations or other destinations that can meet their travel expectations and needs.

Smartphone-based travel entertainment

This smartphone can fill Generation Z tourists' free time between activities such as listening to music or watching movies, as revealed by Aziz in between his activities on a tourist trip to the mountain.

"Again, on the mountain, usually again on the mountain then for rich entertainment listening to music and so on is also on the smartphone, right, it is available there, then again want to sleep continue to not be able to sleep, and also we can as one of the alternatives, we use it, we watch movies or whatever, right. Usually if on the mountain there is no signal.

⁴⁶ Aziz, Interview.

But we have warned that if there is no signal, we have prepared a film that we can watch later, if, for example, there is no activity and so on" (Aziz).

To fill the time between her travel activities, Isma also seeks entertainment by playing games or watching movies on her smartphone to relieve boredom. "Uh, that game. If you continue to watch movies, you can spend time there using the application" (Isma).

The research findings highlight the multifaceted role of smartphones in the travel experiences of Gen Z Muslim travelers, particularly within the context of halal tourism destinations. The study reveals that smartphones are indispensable tools, facilitating various aspects of their journeys. From capturing and sharing travel memories to fulfilling religious needs such as prayer times and locating mosques, smartphones empower these travelers to navigate, explore, and connect meaningfully. The study's utilization of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) provides a deep understanding of the participants' lived experiences, showcasing the transformative influence of smartphones on their travel behaviors and decision-making processes. The insights gleaned from this research contribute significantly to the growing body of knowledge on halal tourism and Gen Z travel trends, offering valuable implications for industry stakeholders and future research endeavors.

The study's findings resonate with existing literature on the pervasive impact of smartphones on travel behavior. Previous research has consistently demonstrated the integral role of smartphones in various travel phases, from pre-trip planning to on-site experiences and post-trip reflections. The current study extends this understanding by explicitly focusing on Gen Z Muslim travelers' unique needs and preferences. The emphasis on religious needs, such as prayer times and mosque locations, aligns with the broader discourse on the importance of catering to Muslim tourists' spiritual dimensions of travel experiences.⁴⁷ The study's findings also support that smartphones are powerful tools for capturing and sharing travel memories, enabling travelers to curate and disseminate their experiences through social media platforms.⁴⁸ This aligns with the growing visual storytelling trend and the increasing reliance on user-generated content in shaping travel decisions and perceptions.⁴⁹

Furthermore, the research highlights the significance of smartphones in assisting with travel logistics, including online bookings, payments, and communication. This corroborates previous findings on the widespread use of smartphones for travel-related tasks, underscoring their convenience and efficiency in facilitating seamless travel experiences.⁵⁰ The study's focus on Gen Z Muslim travelers adds a unique dimension to this understanding, suggesting

⁴⁷ Ainin dkk., "Sentiment analyses of multilingual tweets on halal tourism."

⁴⁸ Allaby dan Shannon, "'I just want to keep in touch': Adolescents' experiences with leisure-related smartphone use."

⁴⁹ Christina K. Dimitriou dan Emad AbouElgheit, "Understanding generation Z's social decision-making in travel," *Tourism and Hospitality Management* (University of Rijeka, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.20867/thm.25.2.4>.

⁵⁰ Wang, Xiang, dan Fesenmaier, "Smartphone Use in Everyday Life and Travel."

that this demographic is particularly adept at leveraging smartphone technology to navigate travel complexities, especially within halal tourism.

The implications of this research are far-reaching, particularly for destinations seeking to attract and cater to the growing market of Gen Z Muslim travelers. The study's findings suggest that providing technology-friendly facilities and services, such as reliable internet access and charging points, can significantly enhance the overall travel experience for this demographic. Moreover, incorporating smartphone-enabled features into halal tourism offerings, such as digital prayer guides and mosque locators, can further enhance the appeal of these destinations and cater to the specific needs of Muslim travelers.

In conclusion, this study offers valuable insights into the multifaceted role of smartphones in shaping the travel experiences of Gen Z Muslim travelers. The findings highlight the transformative influence of smartphones on their travel behaviors, decision-making processes, and overall satisfaction. By recognizing and accommodating the smartphone-centric preferences of this influential demographic, halal tourism destinations can enhance their appeal, foster cultural understanding, and promote responsible tourism practices. The study's implications extend beyond the immediate tourism context, emphasizing the potential for smartphones to empower and connect young Muslim travelers, enabling them to navigate the world with confidence and purpose. As this demographic continues to shape the future of travel, understanding their smartphone usage patterns and preferences will be crucial for the sustainable growth and development of the halal tourism industry.

CONCLUSION

The study successfully achieved its objective of exploring how Gen Z Muslim tourists utilize smartphones during their travels in halal tourism destinations. The research provides a comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon by uncovering the multifaceted motivations, behaviors, and implications associated with smartphone usage. The findings highlight the pivotal role of smartphones in facilitating convenience, connectivity, and self-expression for these travelers, shaping their experiences and interactions within the halal tourism context. Furthermore, the study underscores the implications for the tourism industry and Gen Z Muslim travelers, emphasizing the need for adaptation and the potential for positive impact in areas such as cultural understanding and responsible tourism.

Author's Contribution

Agus Kurnia: Contribute to formulating research ideas, collecting data, processing data, and interpreting data

Catur Sugiyanto, Boyke Rudy Purnomo: Contributing to writing systematics, research methods, analyzing interpretation results

Hendrie Adji Kusworo: Contributed to compiling a literature review.

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Declaration of Competing Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

Ethical Approval

Ethical approval No patient-identifying parts in this paper were used or known to the authors. Therefore, no ethical approval was requested.

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