

Construction of Visitors' Spiritual Meaning in Spiritual Tourism Practices at the Mbah Hamid Religious Tourism Site, Pasuruan

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ABSTRACT

Pilgrimage to Muslim scholars' tombs is a religious practice that can also become a site of spiritual meaning-making. This study analyzes how visitors construct spiritual meaning through pilgrimage at the Mbah Hamid Religious Tourism Site in Pasuruan. A qualitative phenomenological design with an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) orientation was used. Data were obtained through semi-structured in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation involving ten informants: seven primary visitors and three supporting informants. The analysis proceeded case by case through repeated reading, experiential noting, descriptive coding, within-case theme development, and cross-case comparison, followed by interpretation through self-awareness, connectedness, transcendence, and Berger and Luckmann's social construction theory. The findings indicate recurring meanings related to self-reflection, perceived closeness to God, social and environmental connectedness, inner peace, religious practice, emotional regulation, gratitude, and family relationships. These meanings were interpreted as processes of externalization, objectivation, and internalization within the social environment of the pilgrimage site. The study contributes a visitor-centered account of how spiritual meaning is articulated through lived experience and socially shared religious practices.

Kata Kunci

Spiritual Tourism; Konstruksi Makna; Ziarah; Berger Dan Luckmann; Makam Mbah Hamid.

ABSTRAK

Ziarah ke makam ulama Muslim merupakan praktik keagamaan yang juga dapat menjadi ruang untuk pembentukan makna spiritual. Penelitian ini menganalisis bagaimana pengunjung mengonstruksi makna spiritual melalui kegiatan ziarah di Situs Wisata Religi Mbah Hamid di Pasuruan. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain fenomenologis kualitatif dengan orientasi Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Data diperoleh melalui wawancara mendalam semi-terstruktur, observasi partisipatif, dan dokumentasi yang melibatkan sepuluh informan, yaitu tujuh pengunjung sebagai informan utama dan tiga informan pendukung. Analisis dilakukan secara kasus per kasus melalui pembacaan berulang, pencatatan pengalaman, pengodean deskriptif, pengembangan tema dalam setiap kasus, dan perbandingan lintas kasus. Selanjutnya, hasil tersebut diinterpretasikan melalui konsep kesadaran diri (self-awareness), keterhubungan (connectedness), transendensi (transcendence), serta teori konstruksi sosial Berger dan Luckmann. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya makna yang berulang terkait dengan refleksi diri, persepsi kedekatan dengan Tuhan, keterhubungan sosial dan lingkungan, ketenangan batin, praktik keagamaan, pengendalian emosi, rasa syukur, dan hubungan keluarga. Makna-makna tersebut ditafsirkan sebagai proses eksternalisasi, objektivasi, dan internalisasi dalam lingkungan sosial situs ziarah. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi berupa gambaran yang berpusat pada pengunjung mengenai bagaimana makna spiritual diartikulasikan melalui pengalaman hidup dan praktik keagamaan yang dilakukan serta dibagikan secara sosial.

1. Introduction

Pilgrimage to tombs is a religious and cultural practice that has developed within Indonesian Muslim society (Latif and Usman 2021). In contemporary tourism settings, pilgrimage may overlap with religious tourism, while spiritual tourism places stronger emphasis on personal meaning, reflection, transformation, and experiences that participants interpret as spiritually significant (Cheer, Belhassen, and Kujawa 2017). Recent tourism research distinguishes spiritual tourism from faith-oriented travel by emphasizing the seeker's inner quest and experiential transformation, while also recognizing that the two domains can overlap at sacred destinations (Wang *et al.* 2023). The tomb of KH. Abdul Hamid, known as Mbah Hamid, in Pasuruan is a pilgrimage destination where sacred practices coexist with a broader tourism environment (Supriadi, Rahadi, and Hamzanwadi 2022). The site includes the tomb complex, worship facilities, Payung Madinah, public spaces, parking areas, and spaces for local economic activity (Halid and Wahyono 2023). These features create a social setting in which visitors encounter religious symbols, rituals, other pilgrims, site personnel, and local community practices. The present study therefore treats the site not simply as a physical destination, but as a social-religious setting in which visitors articulate and negotiate meaning (Dwihantoro and Vianto 2022). Previous studies have examined pilgrimage motives, social and economic dimensions, and the continuity of religious traditions.

(Karomi, Majid, and Prayogo 2022), for example, found that the pilgrimage tradition at the Ageng Muhammad Besari Tomb was sustained through intergenerational value transfer and social feedback. (Mulki and Kusroni 2024) showed that pilgrimage can connect individual spiritual practice with moral, social, and community dimensions, while (Mujibuddin 2024) identified sacred, sacred-profane, and profane visitor motives at the Brawijaya V site. (Winoto, Anwar, and Septian 2024) further identified tomb and historical tourism as emerging topics in Indonesian religious-tourism research. (Mahatva Yoga, Muhammad Al Fayyadh Maulana, and Muhammad Mansur 2025) shape socio-religious behavior through practices such as almsgiving. Despite these contributions, a specific gap remains. Existing studies largely explain pilgrimage as a collective tradition, classify visitor motives, examine community effects, or discuss spiritual-tourism experiences in broader settings (Anton *et al.* 2024). They do not adequately explain how visitors at the Mbah Hamid site describe, interpret, and negotiate the meaning of their own experiences across self-awareness, connectedness, transcendence, identity reconstruction, and meaning-making (Mahatva Yoga *et al.* 2025). The distinction is

important because collective religious traditions and subjective meaning construction are related but analytically different processes. This study therefore asks how visitors construct spiritual meaning through their lived pilgrimage experiences and how the social environment of the site participates in that construction. The conceptual sequence used in this study is treated as an interpretive framework rather than a predetermined causal model. Self-awareness, connectedness, and transcendence are drawn from spiritual-tourism literature (Taran and Sunarya 2025), while identity reconstruction and meaning-making are treated as themes that may emerge from participants' accounts (Berger and Luckmann 1966) social construction theory is then used to interpret how personal experiences become connected with shared religious practices through externalization, objectivation, and internalization. The framework was used to organize the interview domains and later interpretation, while allowing participant accounts to determine the content of each theme (Keller 2024). Accordingly, this study aims to analyze how visitors construct spiritual meaning through spiritual-tourism practices at the Mbah Hamid Religious Tourism Site in Pasuruan and to identify the experiential and social processes through which those meanings are articulated. Spiritual Tourism and Religious Tourism generally involves travel to sites associated with religious history, sacredness, worship, or faith communities.

Spiritual tourism overlaps with this domain but emphasizes the seeker's subjective experience, search for meaning, self-reflection, transformation, and perceived transcendence. Recent research identifies transformation, healing, atmosphere, transcendence, escape, and divine connectedness as dimensions of the spiritual-tourism experience, while also arguing that spiritual tourism should not be reduced to religious tourism alone (Şahin and Güzel 2024). This distinction is useful for the present study because visitors at Mbah Hamid may participate in a religious practice while simultaneously describing personal reflection, emotional relief, or changes in life orientation (Purwanggono and MM 2026). Meaning construction refers to the process through which people interpret experiences within social and cultural contexts. Berger and Luckmann's original formulation explains social reality through a dialectical relationship between externalization, objectivation, and internalization (Berger and Luckmann 1966). In this study, pilgrimage, prayer, dhikr, religious lectures, respect for the tomb, and interaction among pilgrims are treated as observable practices through which visitors express spiritual needs. When such practices are experienced as established traditions and shared norms at the site, they become objectivated. When visitors incorporate these meanings into their

understanding of themselves, worship, relationships, and everyday life, internalization can be observed in their narratives. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) adds an idiographic layer to this framework. Rather than beginning with a cross-case thematic summary, each participant's account is considered as a case in its own right before patterns are examined across cases. This allows the analysis to retain the particularity of participants' experiences while using social-construction theory to interpret how those experiences relate to the shared religious environment (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin 2021). The conceptual framework positions visitation motivation as an entry point into participants' accounts rather than as a proven causal stage. The analysis first examines how each participant describes the purpose and context of pilgrimage. Themes concerning self-awareness, connectedness, and transcendence are then developed from the experiential accounts. Identity reconstruction and meaning-making are examined as interpretive outcomes where participants describe changes in self-understanding or life orientation. Finally, Berger and Luckmann's externalization, objectivation, and internalization provide a theoretical lens for explaining how these meanings are related to the social environment. The framework is therefore sequential only as an analytical heuristic; participants were not required to experience every theme or to experience them in the same order.

2. Research Methodology

This study used a qualitative phenomenological design with an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) orientation. IPA is concerned with how people make sense of significant lived experiences and requires detailed, case-by-case interpretation before patterns are considered across cases (Smith *et al.* 2021). The study used semi-structured in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation. The source research records that interviews were transcribed verbatim and that descriptive first-cycle coding, memoing, theme development, and cross-informant comparison were used. The analysis was therefore treated as a mixed analytic process: participant accounts were first allowed to generate experiential themes inductively, while self-awareness, connectedness, transcendence, and Berger and Luckmann's concepts provided deductive interpretive lenses at a later stage.

The participants comprised seven primary informants who were visitors and three supporting informants drawn from complementary social and institutional roles at the site. IP-1 was a descendant/family representative of Mbah Hamid, IP-2 was a tomb/site manager, and IP-3 was the Head of the Tourism and Culture Office of Pasuruan Regency/City. Primary informants were selected purposively and homogeneously, with criteria including adulthood, repeated pilgrimage experience, participation in spiritual practices, willingness to provide detailed accounts, and the ability to describe perceived changes in thinking, attitudes, or behavior. The supporting informants were included to provide contextual and triangulation data concerning the religious legacy, site management, public administration, and social setting of the pilgrimage tradition. The supporting-informant interviews were conducted on 10 July 2026 (IP-1), 17 July 2026 (IP-2), and 21 July 2026 (IP-3). Interview duration, recording equipment, exact interview locations, and the specific software used for coding were not recorded in the revised manuscript and should be completed from the researcher's field records if available.

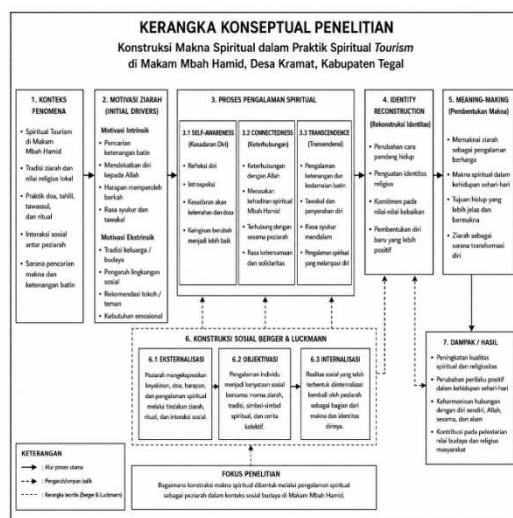


Figure 1. Model of Visitors' Spiritual Meaning Construction

Table 1. Research Informant Profiles

Code	Category	Role at Site	Age	Gender	Occupation	Visit frequency
I-1	Primary visitor	Visitor	64	Male	Entrepreneur	Frequent; exact count not reported
IP-1	Supporting	Descendant of Mbah Hamid / Family representative	20	Female	Not reported	Frequent; exact count not reported

IP-2	Supporting	Tomb/site manager	23	Female	Not reported	Frequent; exact count not reported
I-2	Primary visitor	Visitor	24	Male	Private sector	Fewer than 5 visits
I-3	Primary visitor	Visitor	23	Female	Teacher/Educator	Frequent; exact count not reported
IP-3	Supporting	Head of Tourism and Culture Office, Pasuruan Regency/City	51	Female	DLHKP	Frequent; exact count not reported
I-4	Primary visitor	Visitor	30	Female	Entrepreneur	Frequent; exact count not reported
I-5	Primary visitor	Visitor	41	Male	Farmer	Monthly
I-6	Primary visitor	Visitor	31	Male	Private sector	Fewer than 5 visits
I-7	Primary visitor	Visitor	26	Female	Teacher/Educator	More than 7 visits

Primary data were obtained through semi-structured interviews and participant observation, while secondary data were obtained through documentation and relevant written sources. The interviews were designed to elicit experiences of pilgrimage, ritual practices, symbols, social interactions, and perceived changes after pilgrimage. Supporting-informant interviews were conducted on 10 July 2026 with IP-1, 17 July 2026 with IP-2, and 21 July 2026 with IP-3. The source study states that interview transcripts were produced verbatim. It does not specify the interview duration, exact interview locations, recording procedures, or coding software; these items should be completed from the researcher's field records if available. Ethical participation was based on willingness to be interviewed and permission for the interview results to be used as research data. The manuscript should also state the formal ethics procedure or approval information if such approval was obtained.

The IPA analysis was conducted in four linked stages. First, each transcript was read repeatedly as an individual case, with descriptive notes and experiential comments recorded before comparison with other participants. Second, significant segments were coded and clustered into provisional experiential themes within each case. Third, the emerging themes were reviewed against the complete case narrative and then compared across cases to identify convergence, divergence, and contrasting accounts. Fourth, the cross-case themes were interpreted through self-awareness, connectedness, transcendence, identity reconstruction, meaning-making, and Berger and Luckmann's externalization, objectivation, and internalization. The source study also reports verbatim transcription, member checking, triangulation of interview/observation/documentation data, and an audit trail. The manuscript does not

report a formal saturation rule; therefore, the final version should state the author's actual rationale for stopping recruitment rather than claiming saturation without documentation. For the supporting informants, the interview chronology is explicitly recorded as follows: IP-1 on 10 July 2026, IP-2 on 17 July 2026, and IP-3 on 21 July 2026. These dates identify the supporting interviews used for contextual triangulation and should not be interpreted as the dates of the primary visitor interviews.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

3.1.1 Motivation for Spiritual Tourism Visits

Informant I-1 connected pilgrimage with family tradition and the search for peace: "I admit that perhaps I was introduced to pilgrimage by my family, and it can be said to be a tradition that we always practice at certain moments. The first time I visited, I could feel calm when I heard the religious lecture at this mosque; I became more peaceful and wanted to be closer to God" (I-1). In contrast, I-3 emphasized closeness to pious people and personal improvement: "I have known Romo Kyai Hamid for a long time. I visit simply because I want to be close to people who are close to Allah; I want to become a better person by seeking inner peace so that my behavior and emotions can be more controlled than before" (I-3). These contrasting accounts support a multidimensional interpretation of motivation rather than a single pathway. The experiences of several informants indicate that repeated visits can transform the function of pilgrimage from an activity initially driven by tradition or immediate needs into an activity considered important for maintaining inner peace, improving oneself, and strengthening one's

relationship with God. Thus, initial motivation becomes an entry point into broader spiritual experience. The supporting-informant accounts provide contextual triangulation rather than being treated as additional visitor cases. IP-1, interviewed on 10 July 2026, was a descendant/family representative of Mbah Hamid and described the pilgrimage site from the perspective of lineage, spiritual responsibility, and continuity of Mbah Hamid's religious legacy. IP-2, interviewed on 17 July 2026, was a tomb/site manager who emphasized service to pilgrims, maintenance of order and cleanliness, and the understanding of management work as a form of religious service. IP-3, interviewed on 21 July 2026, was the Head of the Tourism and Culture Office of Pasuruan Regency/City and highlighted the site's significance for religious tourism, public facilities, community welfare, and the balance between spiritual values and destination development. Across the three accounts, the site was consistently described as a social-religious environment in which pilgrimage practices, service, community interaction, and destination management intersect. These accounts strengthen contextual interpretation of the primary visitors' narratives without being used to infer the visitors' subjective experiences.

3.1.2 Self-Awareness

Self-awareness appeared in participants' accounts as reflection on life circumstances, recognition of personal shortcomings, acceptance, and a desire for self-improvement. The evidence is therefore presented as participants' reported reflections rather than as a universal effect of pilgrimage. The role of religious lectures and the atmosphere of the site was repeatedly described as part of this reflective experience. I-1 associated the religious lecture with calmness and a desire for greater closeness to God, while I-3 explicitly connected pilgrimage with an intention to improve personal behavior and emotional control. These accounts suggest that self-awareness was articulated through the interaction of personal concerns with the religious environment, rather than through the physical site alone. The findings also show that inner peace is not understood merely as a consequence of the physical environment, but is related to an individual's ability to be patient, wise, and accepting of problems. Therefore, self-awareness becomes the initial stage connecting the pilgrimage experience with changes in ways of thinking.

3.1.3 Connectedness

Connectedness appeared in three forms in the interview material: connectedness with God, connectedness with other pilgrims, and connectedness with the site environment. Participants described prayer, dhikr, tahlil, religious lectures, and

pilgrimage as practices through which they experienced religious closeness. Social connectedness appeared in feelings of comfort and mutual respect among visitors, while environmental connectedness appeared in attention to cleanliness, order, and the sacred character of the site. For example, I-3 stated: "When I am here I try to watch my words, not litter, and respect other people who are praying. In my opinion, a place like this should be maintained together" (I-3). I-5 similarly explained: "I feel that this place is not merely a tourist site. Because many people come here to worship, we also have to maintain order and cleanliness" (I-5). These accounts show how a shared understanding of the site as a religious space is expressed through everyday social and environmental conduct. Social connectedness was evident in the sense of comfort experienced among other pilgrims even when they did not always know one another. At the same time, visitors developed an awareness of maintaining cleanliness, appropriate speech, order, and respect for others who were worshipping. This indicates that spiritual experience also contains social and ecological dimensions.

3.1.4 Transcendence Experience

Participants described transcendence through feelings of calm, focused prayer, perceived closeness to God, and tawakkul. These experiences were not identical across participants, but they shared a description of temporary relief from everyday burdens and a renewed orientation toward religious practice. I-7 described the experience as follows: "Every time I come here, my heart feels calmer. Thoughts that are usually full of work matters become lighter. When I recite prayers, I feel more focused and as if I can surrender all the burdens I feel to Allah" (I-7). I-5 similarly said: "After attending the religious lecture and praying together, my heart feels more peaceful. When I return home, I feel lighter and more ready to live my daily life" (I-5). I-1 added: "When I pray here, I am reminded that everything I have comes from Allah. I feel more sincere in accepting whatever happens and more surrendered to Him" (I-1). These accounts support an interpretation of transcendence as a personally experienced religious orientation, not as a measurable causal outcome. Transcendence does not occur only while visitors are in the tomb area. The experience carries over into life after pilgrimage through changes in how problems are viewed, acceptance of circumstances, and the belief that human beings need to make efforts, pray, and surrender themselves to God.

3.1.5 Identity Reconstruction

Participants also described changes in everyday attitudes and practices that they associated with their spiritual experiences. These included greater

patience, attention to worship, emotional control, gratitude, and family relationships. Because the study is cross-sectional and relies on retrospective accounts, these statements are treated as perceived changes reported by participants rather than causal effects established by the research design. I-3 reported: "I used to get angry easily when there were problems at home or at work. After frequently making pilgrimages and attending religious lectures, I learned to control my emotions. Now I prefer to solve problems calmly rather than immediately getting angry" (I-3). I-6 said: "Previously I often postponed prayer because I was busy working. After coming here several times, I felt more motivated to maintain prayer on time and read the Qur'an more often" (I-6). I-2 connected the experience with family relations: "I have come to appreciate my family more. I used to rarely make time for them because I was busy working. Now I spend more time together, speak more kindly, and try to be a good example for my children" (I-2). The accounts differ in content but converge on participants' descriptions of changed self-understanding and behavior. Identity reconstruction in this study is primarily evident in a shift from spontaneous responses to problems toward a more patient, reflective, and religious attitude. Pilgrimage experiences and religious lectures became sources of learning that were internalized by informants.

3.1.6 Meaning-Making

Meaning-making appeared when participants connected pilgrimage experiences with broader understandings of life, worship, loss, gratitude, and hope. Rather than assuming a fixed progression, the analysis treats meaning-making as a theme that participants articulated in different ways. I-2 explained: "I used to think that life was only about earning a living. After frequently making pilgrimages, I felt that life is actually an opportunity to worship and become a better person. Earning a living is important, but what is more important is how we live according to Allah's teachings" (I-2). I-5 described meaning-making through bereavement: "I once felt very disappointed when I lost my parent. After coming here several times and attending religious lectures, I began to accept that every human being will return to Allah. From there I learned to be more sincere and continue living" (I-5). These accounts indicate that visitors connected pilgrimage with life interpretation and religious orientation, although the content and intensity of meaning varied across participants. Cross-informant findings show that the final meaning is formed through a combination of personal experience and the social reality surrounding the tomb. Pilgrimage traditions, rituals, religious atmosphere, interactions with pilgrims, and the site's symbols provide a context that allows personal experiences to be given broader meaning.

3.2 Discussion

The interview material can be interpreted through Berger and Luckmann's three moments of social construction in meaning formation. Externalization is evident in participants' religious practices and expressions of spiritual need, including pilgrimage, prayer, dhikr, religious lectures, and efforts to seek peace. Objectivation occurs when these practices are experienced as established traditions, shared norms, and recognizable expectations within the tomb environment. Internalization appears in participants' narratives when site-based meanings are incorporated into their understanding of worship, self, relationships, and everyday life. Supporting informants reinforce this interpretation at the contextual level: IP-1 emphasizes continuity of religious legacy, IP-2 describes service and order as part of the site's religious function, and IP-3 discusses the institutional effort to integrate spiritual values with public management and community welfare. These supporting accounts are used for triangulation of the social setting, not as substitutes for the visitors' lived experiences. This interpretation draws directly on Berger and Luckmann's original work rather than treating Keller as the primary theoretical source (Berger and Luckmann 1966). The findings also extend those of Karomi *et al.* (2022), which emphasize intergenerational value transfer and social feedback in maintaining the pilgrimage tradition at the Ageng Muhammad Besari Tomb.

The present study shifts the analytical focus from the continuity of collective tradition to the visitor's lived account of how a socially established religious environment becomes personally meaningful, making the two perspectives complementary rather than identical. This interpretation extends the findings of previous research (Besari 2022), which places value transfer and social feedback as important elements in the continuity of tradition; in this study, the process is visible at the level of visitors' experiences, with the religious reality already present in the tomb environment influencing how visitors interpret their own experiences. Self-awareness is expressed through reflection, evaluation of personal behavior, and attempts to reinterpret life problems, consistent with spiritual-tourism literature linking spiritual travel with consciousness and transcendence (Wang *et al.* 2023). However, the present findings indicate that reflection is related not only to the tomb itself but also to religious lectures, prayer, dhikr, and the surrounding religious atmosphere, adding a social and ritual context to the individual reflective experience. Self-awareness becomes the starting point of change, as the pilgrimage experience provides space to pause from routine and evaluate life, aligning with spiritual tourism research that positions spiritual journeys as mediums for

consciousness and transcendence (Wang *et al.* 2023). Connectedness is expressed through vertical relationships with God and horizontal relationships with other people and the environment, complementing Zita Malikal Mulki and Kusroni (2024), who connect pilgrimage with moral and social dimensions in the surrounding community. At Mbah Hamid, participants' accounts show that the religious meaning of the site translates into practical expectations concerning cleanliness, order, respectful speech, and consideration for other worshippers. This interconnectedness illustrates that spiritual experience has an intersubjective dimension; closeness to God is the dominant experience, reinforced by the presence of other pilgrims and shared norms regarding respect for religious space. This finding is consistent with previous research (Zita Malikal Mulki and Kusroni 2024), indicating that pilgrimage has moral and social consequences for communities. At the Mbah Hamid Tomb, spiritual and social relationships converge in practices that maintain order, cleanliness, and collective comfort. Transcendence is described through calmness, focused prayer, surrender, and perceived closeness to God, with Wang *et al.* (2023) similarly identifying consciousness and transcendence as vital elements of spiritual-tourism experience. The present study adds that participants locate these experiences within ritual practices and a socially shared religious environment. Importantly, the cross-sectional design does not establish that pilgrimage caused transcendence; rather, it shows that participants interpreted their experiences in these terms.

Meaning-making involves translating experiences into broader orientations toward worship, patience, sincerity, gratitude, acceptance, and hope. This finding aligns with the visitor-centered emphasis of spiritual-tourism research but should not be interpreted as a universal sequence, as some participants emphasized family tradition or specific personal problems, while others focused on self-improvement or religious closeness. The evidence supports a pattern of recurring meanings rather than a fixed developmental pathway. At the meaning-making stage, the experience of transcendence is translated into a life orientation characterized by greater patience, sincerity, gratitude, commitment to worship, and maintenance of hope, demonstrating that spiritual meaning is productive, generating behavioral guidance rather than merely temporary feelings. Identity reconstruction is reported in participants' accounts of perceived changes in emotional control, worship, gratitude, and family relationships. These accounts can be interpreted as forms of internalization, as participants link present behavior with meanings encountered through pilgrimage and religious lectures.

The theoretical contribution thus connects subjective spiritual experience with a socially shared religious environment without claiming a causal effect beyond the evidence. Identity reconstruction indicates that spiritual experience may continue after visitors leave the site, with changes in worship, emotional control, gratitude, and family relationships representing forms of value internalization acquired through the pilgrimage experience. Theoretically, this study demonstrates that social construction theory can bridge personal spiritual experience with collectively constructed social reality. Practically, religious tourism managers should maintain the religious atmosphere, the quality of religious activities, cleanliness, order, and worship facilities, ensuring that destination development does not focus solely on visitor numbers but also preserves the quality of spiritual experiences and sustainable relationships with the local community. This implication is crucial as the physical and social environment has been shown to be part of the meaning-construction process. However, this study has several limitations. It examines one pilgrimage site and relies on a small qualitative sample, so the findings are not statistically generalizable. Additionally, the data are cross-sectional and include retrospective participant accounts, meaning the study cannot demonstrate longitudinal progression or causal effects of pilgrimage. Furthermore, the manuscript does not document all procedural details required for full IPA reporting, such as interview duration, recording procedures, coding software, formal saturation criteria, and a complete reflexive account. Interview dates for the three supporting informants are now documented as 10 July 2026 (IP-1), 17 July 2026 (IP-2), and 21 July 2026 (IP-3); dates for the primary visitors should be added if available in the field records. Future research could employ longitudinal designs, compare multiple pilgrimage sites, or examine how digital mediation and commercialization interact with spiritual meaning-making. This study focuses on visitors' experiences at a single site using a qualitative approach with a limited number of informants, thus the findings are not intended for statistical generalization. Moreover, the study emphasizes spiritual experience and meaning construction rather than specifically examining the influence of digital media, commercialization, or post-pilgrimage impacts, which may become subjects for future research.

4. Conclusion

The study indicates that visitors at the Mbah Hamid Religious Tourism Site describe spiritual meaning through recurring themes of visitation motivation, self-awareness, connectedness, transcendence, identity

reconstruction, and meaning-making. Participants' accounts link pilgrimage with family tradition, the search for inner peace, perceived closeness to God, reflection, social respect, religious practice, emotional control, gratitude, and life interpretation. These are reported experiences and meanings rather than causal effects established by the research design. From Berger and Luckmann's perspective, these accounts can be interpreted as a dialectical relationship between personal action and socially established religious reality. Pilgrimage and worship practices represent externalization; shared religious norms and traditions at the site represent objectivation; and participants' reported incorporation of these meanings into everyday self-understanding represents internalization (Berger and Luckmann 1966). The empirical contribution of the study is therefore a visitor-centered account of how spiritual meaning is articulated within a socio-religious tourism environment. Recommendations are directed to site managers to maintain the religious atmosphere, cleanliness, order, worship facilities, and quality of religious activities; to visitors to reflect on how personally meaningful values are carried into everyday life; and to future researchers to test the proposed interpretive relationships through longitudinal or comparative studies. Recommendations are directed to site managers to maintain the religious atmosphere and quality of facilities, to visitors to integrate spiritual values into everyday life, to the government to develop destinations sustainably, and to future researchers to compare different locations, theories, or approaches.

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