

DESIGNING RELIGIOUS TOUR PACKAGE FOR THE WALI PITU IN BALI

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Abstract

Religious tourism is a form of tourism that has grown alongside increasing interest among travellers in meaningful spiritual, historical, and cultural experiences. As an international tourism destination, Bali not only offers tourism potential rooted in Hindu culture but also houses Islamic journey sites known as the Wali Pitu, which have yet to be systematically studied in the context of tourism product design. This study aims to design and develop an attractive and marketable Wali Pitu religious tourism package in Bali for both domestic and international tourists. This study employs a literature-based approach using an integrative review method that combines a systematic literature review and a narrative review, analyzed through content analysis of reputable scientific publications and relevant academic sources from the past five years. The results indicate that effective religious tourism package design must integrate the destination's spiritual, historical, and cultural values, accompanied by package components that include destination selection, travel routes, religious-historical interpretation, prayer schedule arrangements, and appropriate supporting facilities. This study contributes conceptually by offering a framework for designing religious tourism packages based on a literature synthesis, as well as providing practical implications for the development of religious tourism products that are sensitive to sacred values and oriented toward Quality of tourist experience

INTRODUCTION

Religious tourism is a form of tourism that has experienced significant growth in the global tourism landscape, characterized by travel motivations rooted in spiritual practices, rituals, and the search for religious meaning, in addition to recreational and cultural aspects (Choe, 2025). In a global context, religious tourism is viewed not only as a spiritual phenomenon but also as a key component of local economic development and the preservation of cultural heritage; the number of travellers undertaking

religious journeys continues to rise, reflecting the complex interplay between religious motivations and tourism consumption (Choe, 2025; Rinschede, 1992). In Indonesia, Bali is known as a premier destination for cultural and spiritual tourism due to its rich and diverse local religions and traditions, as well as the growing emergence of spiritual-based tourism forms that are developing as alternatives to mass tourism (Purnamawati et al., 2022). In Bali itself, the phenomenon of religious tourism is not limited to Hindu traditions alone, but also includes Islamic destinations such as Wali Pitu, demonstrating interfaith dynamics as well as opportunities for the development of more inclusive and diverse tourism products (Amaruli & Wastia, 2025).

Although the potential for religious tourism in Bali is recognized both in practice and in academic circles, there remains a gap in conceptual understanding and the design of comprehensive, marketable tourism packages—particularly those that integrate religious values with the needs of modern travelers (Amaruli & Wastia, 2025). A review of the religious tourism literature indicates that many destinations face challenges in maintaining a balance between commercialization and their spiritual authenticity, as well as a lack of empirical research describing optimal practices in the design of religious tourism experiences (Rashid, 2018). In Bali, while some studies have examined the opportunities and challenges of managing religious tourism in locations such as Nusa Penida and Bedugul (Wijaya et al., 2024; Purbayudha, 2025), academic research that holistically focuses on the design of religious tourism packages combining elements of place, historical/spiritual values, and tourist preferences remains scarce.

A theoretical approach to this phenomenon views religious tourism as an interaction between religious motivations and tourism experiences, in which spiritual, cultural, and commercial elements interact in complex ways (Choe, 2025). Modern literature reviews highlight the importance of in-depth analysis to understand the factors influencing religious tourism experiences, including the attributes of spiritual destinations, tourist perceptions, and appropriate marketing strategies (Rinschede, 1992). In the context of Bali, the Wali Pitu phenomenon raises the need to understand how the burial sites of historical/spiritual figures can be integrated into tourism packages that consider theological values, local history, as well as the perceptions of domestic and international markets (Amaruli & Wastia, 2025).

Based on this context and these gaps, this study is designed with the objective of designing and developing an attractive and marketable Wali Pitu religious tourism package in Bali for both domestic and international

tourists. Specifically, this study will address the following questions: (1) what are the Wali Pitu grave sites in Bali along with their historical and spiritual values; and (2) what are the components of an ideal religious tourism package according to literature reviews and religious tourism practices (Amaruli & Wastia, 2025). This framework aims to bridge theoretical understanding and practical needs in the design of distinctive and sustainable religious tourism products in Bali.

The scientific contribution of this article lies in providing a conceptual and practical framework for designing religious tourism packages that integrate Balinese local values with global market perceptions, while bridging the research gap between theoretical studies of religious tourism and practical applications in tour product design. By offering a structured literature review and package design recommendations, this study is expected to enrich the literature on religious tourism and serve as a reference for industry practitioners and academics in the development of sustainable, experience-oriented religious destinations (Choe, 2025; Amaruli & Wastia, 2025).

Review of related literature

Academic studies on religious tourism indicate that the concept of religion- and spirituality-based tourism is grounded in a theoretical framework that has evolved from multidisciplinary studies in the fields of tourism, anthropology, and destination development. Conceptually, religious tourism is defined as a form of travel motivated by religious or spiritual reasons, aimed at visiting sacred places, cultural rituals, or religious sites that hold spiritual significance for individuals or communities (Choe, 2025). Furthermore, studies of spiritual tourism as a subcategory highlight a transcendent dimension that goes beyond mere recreational aspects, including the search for life's meaning, self-reflection, and spiritual purification (Soares et al., 2024; Abdul Halim et al., 2021). This fundamental concept generally refers to the distinction between the motivations for religious travel associated with traditional religious rituals and broader spiritual experiences as a modern tourism phenomenon, which has implications for the design of tourism experiences that take into account the psychological, cultural, and religious needs of travelers (Choe, 2025; Soares et al., 2024).

Various empirical studies and literature have examined the phenomenon of religious tourism from diverse perspectives. Some studies highlight the contribution of religious tourism to economic development and the sustainability of local communities, demonstrating that these tourism activities drive income growth, job creation, and the development of small

and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) around sacred destinations (Febrianti & Handoko, 2025). Additionally, other studies outline the dynamics of managing sacred sites, including challenges in maintaining the sanctity of the sites and providing cultural education for tourists (Wijaya et al., 2024). Qualitative studies also highlight the interplay between religious, commercial, and educational dimensions at specific destinations, revealing the complexity of tourists' experiences beyond mere traditional religious motivations (Yana & Sudrajat, 2024). Furthermore, the literature on spiritual tourism emphasizes the need for a more holistic theoretical framework to understand the spiritual dimension within the context of an evolving tourism landscape (Soares et al., 2024).

In the review of previous research, there are several research gaps that this study aims to address. First, although many studies have examined the economic impacts and management aspects of religious tourism, there remains a limited number of studies that holistically design tourism packages integrating historical and spiritual values, as well as experiential elements, into a structured, market-viable tourism product (Febrianti & Handoko, 2025). Second, the conceptual literature distinguishing between religious and spiritual dimensions in the context of tourism experience design remains relatively limited, particularly regarding the integration of local cultural values and modern tourist demands (Soares et al., 2024; Abdul Halim et al., 2021). Third, most studies still focus on descriptive analysis or specific case studies without offering a theoretical framework that can serve as a practical guide for the development of religious tourism packages in unique locations such as Bali (Febrianti & Handoko, 2025).

The purpose of this article within the existing literature is to fill this gap by providing a conceptual framework and a comprehensive synthesis that integrates the theoretical and practical aspects of designing religious tourism packages, particularly regarding the Wali Pitu destinations in Bali. This study aims to develop a tourism package design that not only fulfills spiritual and historical aspects but also takes into account the preferences of domestic and international markets based on the latest literature review. Thus, this study expands the theoretical understanding of the elements that need to be considered in an integrated religious tourism experience, while also providing a methodological contribution to literature-based tourism research (Abdul Halim et al., 2021; Febrianti & Handoko, 2025).

Theoretical and methodological trends in the religious tourism literature indicate a diversification of approaches, shifting from traditional descriptive studies toward more rigorous systematic mapping, such as systematic literature reviews (SLRs) that use the PRISMA protocol to evaluate the

social, economic, and environmental impacts of religious tourism (Khoiriyah et al., 2025). Theoretical approaches also point to a conceptual distinction between “religious tourism” and “spiritual tourism,” each of which has different implications for the design of tourism experiences (Soares et al., 2024). Methodologically, modern literature reviews emphasize the use of content analysis to identify dominant themes and link them to relevant theoretical frameworks, while empirical studies often employ qualitative approaches to understand tourists’ experiences and perceptions (Khoiriyah et al., 2025; Soares et al., 2024).

The conceptual synthesis of this review indicates that the design of religious tourism packages must be grounded in a deep understanding of spiritual and religious dimensions, the historical value of sites, and the continuously evolving preferences of tourists. The theoretical framework adopted in this article integrates the perspective of religious tourism as a form of travel motivated by religious devotion with that of spiritual tourism as a broader life-value experience, while also taking into account sustainability aspects and the integration of local communities as part of a holistic destination development approach. This integration positions the present study on a solid theoretical foundation in preparation for the methodological section.

Research Method

This section explains in detail the methodological strategies and procedures employed in this study, which adopts a literature-based research approach. The objective is to design and formulate a Wali Pitu religious tourism package in Bali through a systematic conceptual and empirical synthesis of relevant scholarly literature.

The type or strategy of research applied in this study is literature-based research using an integrative review approach that combines elements of a systematic literature review (SLR) and a narrative review. This approach was selected because it enables researchers to map, critically evaluate, and synthesize diverse theoretical and thematic perspectives from scholarly literature relevant to religious tourism, while also facilitating the formulation of a tourism package design framework based on systematic and comprehensive bibliographic evidence (El Archi et al., 2023). In tourism studies, SLR has been widely used to examine the state of research, methodological trends, and to identify future research needs based on transparent and systematic criteria (El Archi et al., 2023; turn0search1).

All data sources used in this study consist of secondary literature, including peer-reviewed journal articles, academic textbooks, and policy reports published in open-access formats. These sources were collected from

credible academic databases such as Google Scholar, DOAJ, Scopus, and Web of Science, as well as repositories of higher education institutions and relevant national and international journals focusing on religious tourism, tourism product design, and tourism studies more broadly. All referenced literature underwent a rigorous selection process based on predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria in accordance with SLR protocols.

The literature data collection technique followed a systematic search protocol designed to ensure replicability and reliability in the scholarly synthesis process. This process comprised: (1) the formulation of primary search keywords such as “religious tourism,” “spiritual tourism,” “tourism package design, (2) the use of Boolean operators (AND, OR) within academic databases; (3) preliminary identification based on titles and abstracts; (4) the elimination of irrelevant literature; and (5) the retrieval of full-text articles that met the inclusion criteria. This approach is consistent with systematic literature review practices in tourism research, which require clearly defined identification, selection, and research assumptions prior to conducting synthesis analysis (El Archi et al., 2023).

The inclusion criteria for literature data in this study were as follows: (a) peer-reviewed journal articles or academic books published within the last five years (2019–2025) to ensure contemporary relevance; (b) publications addressing concepts, theories, methods, or phenomena related to religious tourism, spiritual tourism, or tourism package design; (c) sources available in full-text open-access format; and (d) official policy documents relevant to tourism development in Bali. Conversely, the exclusion criteria included publications that were not fully accessible via open access, non-academic opinion pieces, popular media reports lacking an academic basis, and publications that were not peer-reviewed or were not aligned with the focus of the study (El Archi et al., 2023).

The unit of analysis in this study is scholarly literature rather than primary field data subjects. This aligns with the integrative review approach, which treats each academic document as a distinct data entity to be analyzed based on its contribution to understanding the phenomenon under investigation, such as tourism package design and the characteristics of religious tourism experiences. Although practical actors such as travel agent guides or travel industry reports may be referenced, they are treated as secondary sources that support the conceptual interpretation derived from the primary academic literature.

The data analysis technique employed in this study is content analysis adapted for a literature review context. Content analysis was conducted through the identification of key themes, concepts, and theoretical models

emerging from the selected literature, which were then narratively synthesized to construct a coherent and meaningful conceptual understanding of religious tourism package design. This method reflects common practices in tourism research that use content analysis to map thematic issues, patterns of consensus, and research gaps across previous studies. In the context of literature-based research, content analysis enables the synthesis of data from multiple scholarly sources into holistic new knowledge without relying on primary field data, making it well suited to the objectives of this study.

In practice, analytical support tools such as reference management software (e.g., Mendeley or Zotero) were used to organize sources, ensure citation consistency, and facilitate the coding process prior to final thematic integration. This ensured that the analysis was conducted in a systematic and well-documented manner.

Accordingly, this methodological approach provides a robust and transparent foundation for readers to understand how the literature was collected, analyzed, and synthesized to generate scholarly contributions to the design of the Wali Pitu religious tourism package in Bali as proposed in this study.

Results

The results of this study are presented based on an integrative literature review approach employing content analysis techniques applied to scholarly publications relevant to religious tourism, spiritual tourism, and tourism package design. The analyzed literature consists of reputable national and international journal articles published within the last five years and available in open-access formats. Overall, the publication characteristics indicate that most studies originate from Asian contexts and countries with strong religious journey traditions, including Indonesia, Malaysia, India, and several Southern European countries, with a primary focus on destination development, tourist experience, and the sustainability of religious tourism (Soares et al., 2024; Khoiriyah et al., 2025; Febrianti & Handoko, 2025; Wijaya et al., 2024). The reviewed literature is dominated by qualitative approaches and literature-based studies, while purely quantitative studies addressing religious tourism package design in a specific manner remain relatively limited (El Archi et al., 2023; Soares et al., 2024).

The synthesis of the reviewed literature reveals several dominant thematic patterns related to the characteristics of religious tourism destinations. Previous studies consistently identify three core attributes of religious tourism destinations: spiritual value (sacredness, rituals, and worship

practices), historical value (narratives of religious figures, past events, and physical heritage), and cultural value (local traditions, symbols, and indigenous wisdom) (Abdul Halim et al., 2021; Yana & Sudrajat, 2024). The literature further indicates that the presence of revered religious figures, such as saints or wali, plays a crucial role in shaping destination attractiveness and tourist visitation motivation (Soares et al., 2024; Wijaya et al., 2024). These findings appear consistently across diverse geographical contexts, including destinations representing religious minorities within regions culturally dominated by other religions.

Subsequent findings from the literature review highlight trends related to the motivations and characteristics of religious tourists. Several studies report that tourist motivation is not solely ritualistic in nature but also encompasses the pursuit of inner peace, historical learning, and authentic cultural experiences (Choe, 2025; Soares et al., 2024). Available quantitative literature suggests that religious tourists often exhibit high destination loyalty and a strong propensity for repeat visits when spiritual experiences and tourism services are adequately fulfilled (Febrianti & Handoko, 2025). Furthermore, differences in preferences between domestic and international tourists have been identified, particularly in terms of length of stay, facility requirements, and interpretations of the spiritual value of destinations (Yana & Sudrajat, 2024).

The content analysis also identifies key components of religious tourism packages that are frequently recommended in the literature. These components include the selection of primary and supporting destinations, the design of efficient and spiritually meaningful travel routes, the provision of historical and religious interpretation by qualified guides, the scheduling of visits in alignment with worship activities, and the provision of supporting facilities such as accommodation, halal food services, and appropriate transportation (Abdul Halim et al., 2021; Khoiriyah et al., 2025). The literature emphasizes that effective religious tourism packages typically integrate educational and reflective elements without diminishing the sacredness of the destinations (Soares et al., 2024; Febrianti & Handoko, 2025).

From a methodological perspective, the reviewed studies demonstrate dominant analytical approaches commonly employed in religious tourism research. Content analysis and thematic analysis are widely used in qualitative studies and literature reviews to identify key themes such as spirituality, tourist experience, and destination sustainability (El Archi et al., 2023; Khoiriyah et al., 2025). Qualitative field studies predominantly utilize in-depth interviews and participant observation, whereas quantitative

research relies on tourist perception surveys analyzed using descriptive and basic inferential statistics (Wijaya et al., 2024; Yana & Sudrajat, 2024). However, only a limited number of studies explicitly integrate these findings into a structured framework for religious tourism package design.

The final thematic synthesis indicates that the literature consistently highlights the need to integrate spiritual values with commercial aspects in the development of religious tourism products. The analyzed studies note that the success of religious tourism destinations is strongly influenced by the ability of managers to maintain a balance between preserving site sanctity and delivering professional tourism services (Choe, 2025; Abdul Halim et al., 2021). Additionally, several publications emphasize the importance of involving local stakeholders and travel industry actors in designing tourism products that are sensitive to religious and cultural values (Febrianti & Handoko, 2025; Wijaya et al., 2024). Collectively, these findings establish an empirical and conceptual foundation for understanding how religious tourism packages can be designed based on existing literature, without introducing further interpretation or evaluation at the results stage.

Discussion

The findings of this literature-based study confirm that the conceptual design of a Wali Pitu religious tourism package in Bali addresses the research objectives and problem formulation, namely identifying destinations along with their historical and spiritual values and formulating attractive and marketable religious tourism package components. The literature synthesis demonstrates that religious tourism destinations are consistently understood as spaces integrating spiritual, historical, and cultural dimensions; therefore, tourism packages cannot be treated merely as commercial products but rather as media for religious experience and value-based learning (Soares et al., 2024). This finding directly aligns with the research objective of developing a Wali Pitu tourism package capable of meeting the needs of both domestic and international tourists without diminishing the sacred meaning of the destinations (Choe, 2025).

Within the theoretical framework of religious tourism and spiritual tourism, the findings reinforce the view that tourist travel motivations are multidimensional and extend beyond formal religious rituals. Contemporary literature indicates that religious tourism experiences encompass the pursuit of inner peace, self-reflection, and the consumption of historical and local cultural knowledge (Abdul Halim et al., 2021). Accordingly, the design of a Wali Pitu religious tourism package in Bali should be situated within an integrative perspective that combines religious tourism theory—emphasizing sacredness and worship practices—with spiritual tourism

theory, which highlights subjective experiences and tourists' transcendental values (Soares et al., 2024). This framework helps explain why components such as historical interpretation, narratives of wali figures, and the scheduling of worship activities are essential elements of religious tourism packages.

When compared with previous studies, the results of this research are consistent with findings emphasizing the importance of balancing religious value preservation and professional tourism management. Prior studies suggest that failure to maintain this balance may reduce the spiritual meaning of destinations and diminish tourist satisfaction (Wijaya et al., 2024). At the same time, this study complements existing literature that primarily focuses on the economic impacts of religious tourism by placing greater emphasis on tourism product design as a systematic conceptual process—an aspect that has received relatively limited attention in previous research (Febrianti & Handoko, 2025). This distinction indicates that the present article not only confirms earlier findings but also broadens the scope of religious tourism research from impact analysis toward product design considerations.

The primary scholarly contribution of this article lies in strengthening the conceptual foundation for religious tourism package design through an integrative literature-based approach. By synthesizing thematic findings related to destination characteristics, tourist motivations, and package components, this article offers a framework that may serve as an initial reference for future research and for the practical development of religious tourism products. This approach complements systematic literature reviews in tourism studies, which often focus on mapping research trends without explicitly linking them to tourism product design (El Archi et al., 2023). Furthermore, this article contributes to the enrichment of religious tourism literature in Indonesia, which remains largely dominated by descriptive studies and limited case analyses.

Nevertheless, this study has limitations that should be acknowledged proportionally. First, as it is entirely literature-based, the findings depend on the availability and quality of the analyzed scholarly publications and therefore do not represent direct empirical perceptions of tourists or travel industry practitioners. Second, variations in geographical and cultural contexts within the reviewed literature may influence the generalizability of the findings when applied specifically to the Wali Pitu context in Bali (Khoiriyah et al., 2025). These limitations indicate that the findings of this study are conceptual in nature and require further validation through field-based research.

The implications of this discussion suggest that future studies may be directed toward qualitative or mixed-methods research involving tourists, tour guides, and destination managers to validate the proposed tourism package framework. For tourism practitioners, the findings highlight the importance of designing religious tourism packages that are sensitive to spiritual and local cultural values while remaining responsive to market needs. From a policy perspective, the literature underscores the need for regulatory support and management guidelines for religious tourism that ensure destination sustainability and social harmony in tourist areas (Choe, 2025).

Conclusion

This study concludes that the conceptual design of a Wali Pitu religious tourism package in Bali can be effectively developed through a literature-based approach that integrates spiritual, historical, and cultural dimensions as the core foundation of tourism product development. The findings indicate that the tomb destinations of the Wali Pitu possess strong potential as religious tourism attractions when organized into structured travel packages that incorporate historical narratives and the religious values of the figures, while also aligning with the needs and characteristics of tourists. Thus, the research objective of formulating attractive and marketable religious tourism package components is addressed through a thematic synthesis of relevant and up-to-date literature.

In terms of contribution, this article provides a conceptual contribution to the development of religious tourism studies by offering a package design framework grounded in the integration of religious tourism and spiritual tourism theories. Its practical contribution lies in providing an initial reference for travel industry practitioners and tourism stakeholders in developing religious tourism packages that are sensitive to spiritual values while oriented toward the quality of tourist experiences. Academically, this research expands the focus of religious tourism studies from impact analysis and destination management toward evidence-based tourism product design.

The implications of this research open opportunities for future studies that combine conceptual approaches with empirical data through field research to test the relevance and applicability of the designed tourism packages. Subsequent research may involve the perceptions of tourists, tour guides, and destination managers to enrich understanding of the dynamics of religious tourism experiences and enhance the practical validity of the proposed framework, thereby supporting the sustainable and contextually grounded development of Wali Pitu religious tourism in Bali.

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