

# Halal lifestyle super apps: key service quality attributes from online reviews

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – The advent of super apps aims to increase user convenience and service performance by consolidating various services into a unified platform. Despite the emergence of faith-based super apps, little is known about their key performance attributes valued by users. This study aims to identify the unique set of key service quality attributes of halal lifestyle super apps, grouped into two types: functional and experiential.

**Design/methodology/approach** – In total, 2,459 user comments gathered from a popular super app catering to the halal lifestyle market were analyzed using Leximancer.

**Findings** – Analysis revealed 11 key service quality themes of halal lifestyle super apps: “app,” “time,” “ads,” “premium,” “adhan,” “read,” “phone,” “useful,” “account” and “better,” with “thank” representing an outcome and indirect driver of halal lifestyle super app service quality. Faith-based needs such as accurate prayer times, reliable adhan notifications and Quran-related features were particularly salient within the functional-type attributes. Users generally had positive sentiments toward halal lifestyle super apps.

**Practical implications** – The findings enable lifestyle brand managers to design, develop and benchmark super apps for their halal markets based on the uncovered themes and the functional–experiential framework, ensuring both operational reliability and values-based alignment.

**Originality/value** – To the best of the authors’ knowledge, this study is among the first to explore the service quality of halal lifestyle super apps by analyzing actual user feedback using Leximancer. This paper defines halal lifestyle super apps and uncovers the combination of service quality dimensions applicable to the faith-based super app service environment. By linking general super app service quality features to faith-specific user expectations, this paper contributes to the literature on digital service quality and Islamic Marketing.

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## 1. Introduction

The rapid growth of digital platforms has revolutionized how consumers access services, with super apps emerging as a dominant force in the mobile app market. The global super app market is expanding rapidly and is projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 27.8% from 2024 to 2030 (GrandViewResearch, 2025). In parallel, the global halal economy reached US\$2.29 trillion in consumer spending in 2022, encompassing sectors such as food, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, modest fashion, travel and media (DinarStandard, 2023). The expansion of the halal lifestyle market reflects the increasing demand from the world's 2 billion Muslims, particularly the younger generation, for digital products and services aligned with Islamic principles (DinarStandard, 2023).

In this halal-digital ecosystem, super apps such as Muslim Pro have become influential players in catering to the halal lifestyle market by offering unified faith-based features. Originally launched as a prayer time and Quran app, Muslim Pro has evolved into a comprehensive platform featuring Islamic content, lifestyle services and an AI-powered Islamic chatbot (Bitsmedia, 2024). The integrated features in the app not only enhance user convenience but also meet the spiritual and practical needs of Muslim consumers, supporting broader aspects of halal living (Kabir *et al.*, 2024). By combining functional utilities (e.g. payments, navigation and service integration) and experiential value (e.g. trust, personalization and perceived lifestyle fit), such platforms have become essential tools in the daily lives of Muslims. This underscores the importance of understanding both the technological and socio-cultural factors in developing an effective halal lifestyle super app (Statista, 2025).

Despite the growing prominence of digital service platforms such as super apps, academic research has yet to fully explore their service quality attributes. Service quality remains critical in influencing positive outcomes such as satisfaction and loyalty in halal markets (Noor, 2025). Since its early model conceptualization for services provisioned by human service agents (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1991; Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988), service quality theory has evolved to factor in other service agent types, including services performed by websites (Parasuraman *et al.*, 2005), self-service technologies (Lin and Hsieh, 2011) and even artificial intelligence (AI) service agents (Chen *et al.*, 2022; Noor *et al.*, 2022). Each of these service quality models contains a unique set of service quality dimensions. Accordingly, as the set of attributes that consumers use to perceive and evaluate service quality can vary for different service environments (Rust and Oliver, 1994), it remains theoretically unclear how this would manifest in the context of super apps and halal lifestyle markets. Recent digital- or service-related studies in the Islamic Marketing literature include those in technology adoption (Mehboob *et al.*, 2025; Noor, 2024), Muslim-friendly travel services (Arasli *et al.*, 2021), Islamic finance (Nizam, 2025) and halal food purchasing apps (Juliana *et al.*, 2024). Further studies on the importance of mobile app design in driving customer satisfaction in halal markets also remain relevant (Baran and Barutçu, 2025). A systematic literature review by Noor (2025) highlighted that halal service quality models often adapted extant traditional models including SERVQUAL (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1991; Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988) while some adopted the novel CARTER model with the dimension of Islamic law compliance (Dandis and Wright, 2020). Recent comprehensive systematic reviews have called for more innovation to advance the halal industry (Marlina *et al.*, 2025)

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and for more service quality research on halal services provisioned using mobile platforms (Noor, 2025).

Thus, a conceptual gap remains in the literature as few studies have explored which functional and experiential service quality dimensions are most valued by users of halal lifestyle super apps. Our qualitative method in using Leximancer also allows us to explore meaningful insights from user-generated content and actual app feedback as opposed to self-reported surveys used in most current studies on halal service quality on digital platforms (Ahmed *et al.*, 2021; Baber, 2019; Suhartanto *et al.*, 2024; Syah and Olivia, 2022; Tabash *et al.*, 2019) as well as research on non-faith-based super apps (Fang *et al.*, 2024; Zhu *et al.*, 2023). A clearer understanding of important service quality themes for halal lifestyle super apps is critical to making informed investment decisions in the design of halal lifestyle super apps as well as to monitor and improve service quality performance for users carefully. A better understanding of the relevant service quality dimensions will also contribute to the service quality literature by identifying the specific set of service quality factors that matter to consumers in the context of halal lifestyle super apps and whether any of these factors are unique to the literature. Thus, this study aims to address the following research question:

*RQ1.* What are the key service quality attributes valued by users of halal lifestyle super apps?

Through an analysis of user-generated comments from a leading halal lifestyle super app, rich and genuine insights based on actual user perceptions can be obtained. The results of this study contribute to the literature on service quality and Islamic marketing in three significant ways. First, it distinguishes halal lifestyle super apps from conventional super apps by identifying the dual role of functional performance and experiential attributes in shaping user perceptions. Second, it identifies 11 key themes that reflect the unique set of service quality dimensions valued by halal lifestyle super app users, including faith-specific features like “time” (prayer timings), “adhan” (call to prayer) and “read” (Quran-related functions), as well as platform-related attributes such as “app functionality” and “ads”. Third, it provides practical insights for app developers and marketers to design and benchmark super apps that meet the unique needs of halal markets, ultimately enhancing user experience and trust in digital halal services.

Theoretically, our set of 11 themes confirms insights from previous service quality models such as E-S-QUAL (Parasuraman *et al.*, 2005) and M-S-QUAL (Huang *et al.*, 2015), highlighting the importance of efficiency and reliability in the service performance of digital platforms. In addition, similar to the “Compliance” dimension in the CARTER model (Dandis and Wright, 2020), our set of themes introduces new faith-related functional drivers for Islamic-based digital service quality. This reflects the effects of different service environments on the composition of service quality evaluations (Rust and Oliver, 1994) and extends the service quality theory using the lens of faith-based digital super app services.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. We will review the literature on super apps and service quality, with a focus on halal lifestyle applications. Following which, this study will explain the methodology used, including data collected and analyzed using Leximancer. The findings and thematic analysis highlighting the key themes and user sentiments will be discussed. This paper will conclude with the theoretical and managerial implications as well as the limitations and directions for future research.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 Defining super apps and halal lifestyle super apps

Super apps, which integrate multiple services such as e-commerce, finance and transportation into a single interface, have gained widespread adoption, particularly in

developing regions (van der Vlist *et al.*, 2024). The super app has emerged as a significant development in mobile platformization, especially within Asia and other developing markets. While the concept was operationalized most prominently by WeChat in China (Lucas and Lopes, 2024), the term was first formally defined by BlackBerry founder Mike Lazaridis in 2010 as “a closed ecosystem of many apps” offering efficient, integrated experiences (Baquero, 2021). As shown in Table A1 (in Appendix), definitions across the literature consistently describe super apps as mobile-based, platform-oriented ecosystems that integrate multiple services into a single interface, enabling users to perform diverse tasks without switching between applications (Baquero, 2021; Steinberg *et al.*, 2022; van der Vlist *et al.*, 2024). Although integration is the unifying element across definitions, scholars differ in their framing. Baquero (2021) and Roa *et al.* (2021) stressed the “marketplace” and “one-stop service” nature of super apps, highlighting convenience, service convergence and efficiency. Others, such as Lucas and Lopes (2024) and Steinberg *et al.* (2022), view super apps as infrastructural media that are highly adaptable to regulatory, technological and cultural contexts. Hasselwander (2024) shifted attention toward service diversity and personalization, while van der Vlist *et al.* (2024) proposed a typology of Swiss-Army Knife, Family-Style, Host and Hub to describe different integration and expansion strategies.

A halal lifestyle super app functions similarly to its secular counterparts, such as WeChat in China or Gojek in Indonesia, by serving as a centralized mobile gateway to daily life services (Baquero, 2021). However, it is distinct in its integration of faith-based features that are tailored to the Muslim consumer (Khamim, 2022; Wan Ismail *et al.*, 2024). In addition to common services like digital banking, food delivery and e-commerce, a halal lifestyle super app may offer religiously tailored functionalities such as prayer time notifications, Quran recitation tools, halal food locators, Islamic calendar utilities (e.g. hijri date converter, Eid reminders) and zakat and waqf calculators. Notable examples already in operation include The Arah (Indonesia), The Noor (Malaysia) and Muslim Pro (Singapore), which illustrate the growing demand for platforms that serve both practical and spiritual needs.

This combination of broad utility and values-based orientation requires a more specific conceptualization of what constitutes a halal lifestyle super app. Such platforms typically adopt a hybrid platform logic that combines vertical integration of proprietary services (e.g. shariah-compliant banking or curated content) with horizontal interoperability (e.g. through APIs with halal certification bodies, mosque databases and Islamic lifestyle brands) Accordingly, this study defines a halal lifestyle super app as *a mobile platform app that integrates a wide range of lifestyle, commercial, and faith-based services within a unified interface governed by Islamic ethical standards and designed to serve as a digitally embedded infrastructure for the halal economy*. This definition captures both the technological versatility and religious integrity required to support the dynamic needs of Muslim consumers in the digital world, as well as the potential for digital platforms to support Muslim communities in their halal literacy (Fahrullah and Musafak, 2025). The service quality attributes that enable these outcomes are discussed in the following section.

## 2.2 Service quality for super apps and the halal lifestyle

To understand how halal lifestyle super apps can effectively integrate and scale, it is essential to consider the service quality attributes that underpin successful super apps. Service quality refers to “the global judgement, or attitude, related to the superiority of the service” (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988, p. 16). It encompasses not only tangible service outputs but also the processes, resources and contextual interactions involved in delivering the service (Grönroos, 1984). The definition has evolved from its early conceptualization in human-delivered services to encompass digital and AI-enabled environments (Lin and Hsieh, 2011;

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Chen *et al.*, 2022). More recent frameworks such as E-S-QUAL (Parasuraman *et al.*, 2005) for online services and M-S-QUAL for mobile service contexts (Huang *et al.*, 2015) extend these foundations by addressing dimensions like efficiency, system availability, privacy, responsiveness and contact.

In the context of super apps, service quality can be grouped into functional (the technical capabilities that ensure reliable, seamless service) and experiential attribute types (the perceptions, emotions and lifestyle fit that sustain long-term user engagement) (Fang *et al.*, 2024; Zhu *et al.*, 2023) (see Table A1 in Appendix for definitions, service quality aspects and their explicit translation into the halal lifestyle super app context). For halal lifestyle super apps, these dimensions must also align with Islamic ethical values and religious appropriateness, making the balance between operational effectiveness and values alignment a central challenge (Wan Ismail *et al.*, 2024).

Functional-type attributes cover the platform's ability to deliver services efficiently, reliably and intuitively. For instance, Baquero's (2021) super app model highlights integrated payments, convenience and seamless user experience as essential foundations for building trust in centralized halal commerce. Lucas and Lopes (2024) reinforced this by emphasizing fluid, contextual and centralized access to religious features such as Qur'an recitation, halal shopping and prayer alerts. Similarly, Roa *et al.* (2021) and Hasselwander (2024) stressed delivering essential services, such as transportation, financial transactions and food delivery, through an integrated, easy-to-use platform. Integration strategies outlined by van der Vlist *et al.* (2024) also contribute to functional performance by enabling either direct embedding of Islamic services or the integration of verified third-party offerings like halal certification APIs and waqf platforms.

Beyond functionality, experiential attributes play a crucial role in sustaining engagement. Experiential attributes focus on how users perceive, emotionally connect with, and evaluate the platform over time. Zhu *et al.* (2023) identified trust, habit and relative advantage as drivers of long-term engagement. Trust, in particular, has been shown to be a key factor in purchasing decisions in halal industries (Mingxian *et al.*, 2025; Suhud *et al.*, 2024a) as well as in studies analyzing interaction quality (Al-Abdallah *et al.*, 2025). Attributes such as perceived fit and positive synergy may ensure that religious services are meaningfully integrated into the user's lifestyle. Meanwhile, perceived entitativity (the sense of a cohesive platform identity) and privacy are especially important in faith-based environments, where users are sensitive to ethical data use and service transparency. Complementing this, Fang *et al.* (2024) highlighted the roles of external prestige, brand competence and compatibility as perceptual drivers that can enhance the credibility and appeal of super apps serving niche religious segments.

Taken together, functional and experiential attributes offer a comprehensive framework for conceptualizing service quality in halal lifestyle super apps. This goes beyond a mere delivery of integrated features such as prayer notifications, Quran recitations, halal service locators and digital Islamic tools, but includes service quality attributes that build trust, habit and perceived relevance in users' daily lives. These insights, combined with the mappings in Table A1 (see Appendix), provide a clearer conceptual bridge between general super app service quality features and the unique themes relevant for halal lifestyle platforms with a contribution to both the digital service quality and Islamic marketing literature. This offers the conceptual basis for interpreting the results of the Leximancer analysis presented in the subsequent sections.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Data source and collection

To explore the main service quality themes in halal lifestyle super apps, this study gathered user-generated content from the Muslim Pro app. Muslim Pro is a well-known digital

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platform that supports the spiritual and everyday needs of Muslim users. It provides various features, including accurate prayer time notifications, Quran recitations, halal restaurant locators and Islamic calendar tools. Due to its global popularity and widespread use across both Muslim-majority and minority regions, it is one of the most downloaded Islamic mobile applications in the world (Bitsmedia, 2024). Over time, Muslim Pro has evolved into a broader faith-based lifestyle super app, integrating new services such as Muslim-friendly entertainment with the Qalbox video-on-demand subscription platform, reflecting a shift in demand for holistic spiritual and lifestyle support within digital Muslim communities (Din, 2025). This broad user base and diversified functionality make it a strong case for examining customer experiences within the digital Islamic services landscape. Given Muslim Pro's long establishment in the app industry in 2010 as compared to relatively newer super apps such as The Noor which was launched in 2021 (Pratama, 2022), we have also decided to select Muslim Pro as our sample halal lifestyle super app for this study.

Ethics exemption was granted by the co-author's institution as secondary data related to user comments only was used for the study. A total of 2,459 user reviews written in English were collected from the Muslim Pro app on the Android store. The number of reviews is more than the 1,250 reviews analyzed in Arasli *et al.* (2021) and the 279 user comments in Noor *et al.* (2025). Further, while sampling from traditional non-user-generated content offers clearer precision in terms of sample size appropriateness, using user reviews offers its own advantage of capturing real-world consumer behavior and reduces response biases (Kübler *et al.*, 2025). In addition, while the study by van der Vlist *et al.* (2024) on super apps extracted app information from the Android store, our study focuses on data related to user comments. The sampling strategy consisted of extracting all available customer reviews in the Android store without specifying any period to comprehensively review all comments regarding the app performance. Upon collection, the earliest customer review was made in the year 2018, while the latest review was in February 2025 which was the end of the data collection process for this study. Similar to seminal halal studies by Arasli *et al.* (2021) and Noor *et al.* (2025) which use Leximancer, only English reviews were chosen as this was the dominant language used in reviews that would be suitable for collective processing using Leximancer. Further, online reviews from mobile app platforms have become increasingly valuable in academic research, particularly in the study of service quality and consumer behavior (Cheong *et al.*, 2020; Schuckert *et al.*, 2015). Reviews from the Android store offer a high volume of user feedback with diverse opinions, making them suitable for natural language processing tools such as Leximancer. Past studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of analyzing Android app reviews through Leximancer to extract key themes in areas such as wellness apps (Byun *et al.*, 2023). These reviews provide natural, unsolicited feedback that offers genuine insight into users' expectations, levels of satisfaction and perceptions of value within a digital environment. For pre-processing steps, the reviews collected were separated by paragraphs and reviewed by the coauthors to ensure that the data set was appropriate for analysis.

### 3.2 Data analysis using Leximancer

The collected data was analyzed using Leximancer, a software tool designed for qualitative analysis. Leximancer uses advanced language processing techniques and machine learning to identify recurring ideas and themes from unstructured text (Thomas, 2014). This method has been widely used in research related to mobile applications (Byun *et al.*, 2023) and studies involving Muslim users and digital platforms (Arasli *et al.*, 2021). By examining the proximity of how words appear together, the software produces a visual map that highlights the most important themes and shows how they are connected. This process helps to convert unstructured review content into clearly defined insights (Haynes *et al.*, 2019). In terms of

biases in analysis, Leximancer uses a consistent Bayesian-based algorithm process to induce the concepts from the text, thereby reducing coding bias as well as independence and biases often critiqued in traditional human analysis in qualitative research (Goh and Wilk, 2024; Smith and Humphreys, 2006).

Reviews gathered from the Android store were processed through Leximancer using its default settings. This grouped related concepts into overarching themes based on their frequency and connection to one another. These themes offer a deeper understanding of what users value most and the concerns they commonly express. The above qualitative research design of using Leximancer, a computer-assisted text analysis program, to thematically analyze mobile app user comments and produce a concept map has also been used in extant research on halal consumer markets (Noor *et al.*, 2025). While Leximancer allowed for the automatic processing of text and generating concept seeds before the final concept map output (Haynes *et al.*, 2019), manual cross-checking by the coauthors was further done to ensure the validity of the Leximancer results. Specifically, investigator triangulation was done with all coauthors interpreting and agreeing upon the themes, while method triangulation involved the interpretation of the results against the literature. These results will be explored in detail in the following section of the study and guided by the extant service quality literature for various service environments, service quality aspects of super apps and service quality models for halal industries (Noor, 2025).

## 4. Results

### 4.1 *User attitudes of halal lifestyle super app*

Figure 1 shows 11 themes that emerged from the Leximancer content analysis which are related to the key attributes of super apps for halal lifestyle. The connectivity and significance percentages recorded from Leximancer were as follows: “app” (count = 3,531, relevance = 100.0%), “time” (1,666, 47.2%), “ads” (1,462, 41.4%), “premium” (1,165, 33.0%), “adhan” (1,022, 28.9%), “read” (661, 18.7%), “phone” (535, 15.2%), “useful” (149, 4.2%), “account” (141, 4.0%), “better” (137, 3.9%) and “thank” (134, 3.8%). We proceed to discuss these themes and their corresponding concepts from the concept map and outputs produced by Leximancer in the order of their significance which corresponds to their thematic hierarchy. Beyond identifying these themes, the analysis focuses on interpreting how and why each theme shapes user perceptions of service quality in the halal lifestyle super app context.

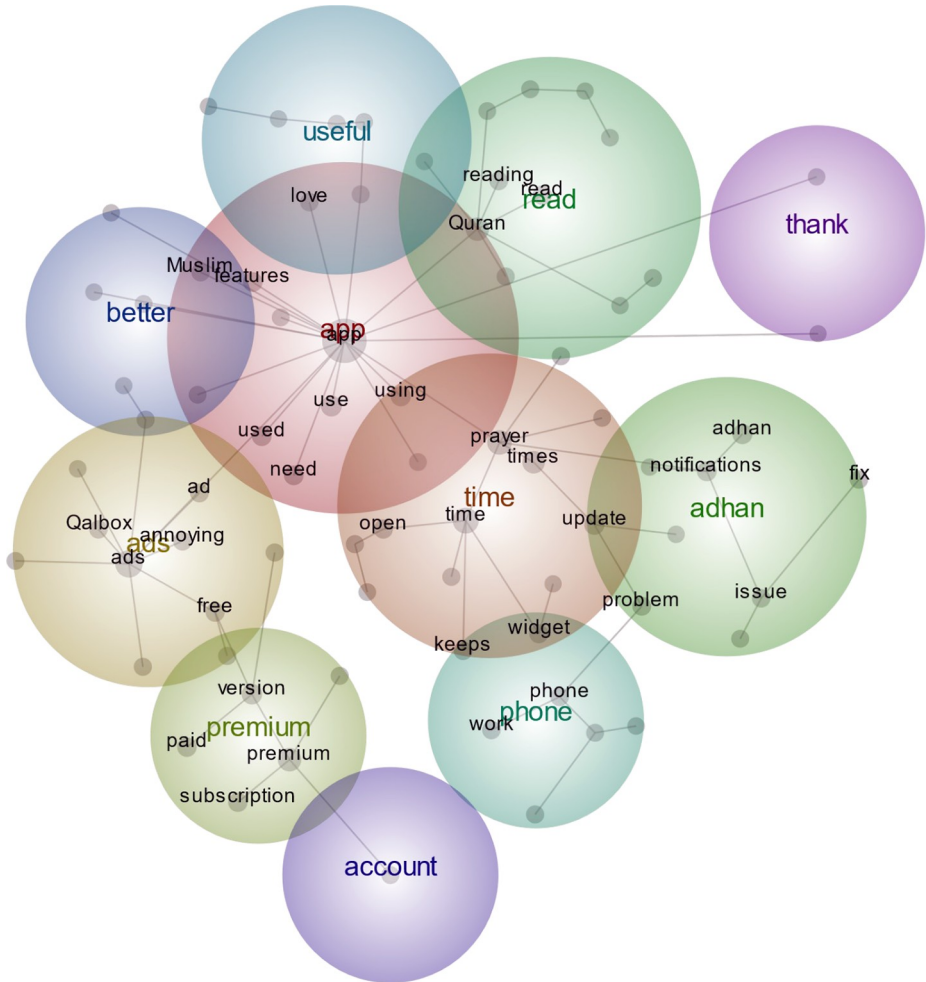
**4.1.1 App.** The theme “app” was the most salient from the online reviews gathered in this study. This theme includes the concepts of Muslim (84%), “using” (83%), “love” (79%), “used” (78%), “use” (75%), “features” (75%), “need” (66%) and “Quran” (65%). Reviewers shared how the app represented a super app with multiple features and functions, some of which resonated more with the users than others:

This app is really helpful, all the functionality I need is on this app, especially Qibla, Adhan Notification, Quran, those 3 are features that I use the most.

It’s full of bloatware features, the features you don’t need and perhaps you wouldn’t use either.

I love all the additional features that have been added such as the Quran tracker. I mostly use this app to help my kids practice their surahs and the fact that it plays in the background even when I have locked the phone is my favorite feature.

Taken together, these user accounts reveal how service quality evaluations are formed at the app level rather than through isolated functions. The prominence of this theme indicates that users evaluate service quality holistically at the app level rather than through isolated features. Users perceive the app as an integrated ecosystem that should support multiple



**Figure 1.** Concept map of halal lifestyle super app reviews

Source: Created by the authors

religious and lifestyle needs seamlessly. Positive expressions such as “love” and “need” suggest emotional attachment and reliance, while negative references to “bloatware” indicate frustration when feature abundance undermines usability. This demonstrates that functional breadth alone does not guarantee perceived quality; rather, relevance and integration of features are critical.

This theme is related to the service quality dimensions of functionality and enjoyment which are valued by users of self-service technologies (Lin and Hsieh, 2011). The centrality of the “app” theme also provides an interpretive anchor for subsequent themes, as concerns related to prayer time, adhan reliability, advertising and premium fairness are ultimately evaluated in terms of their impact on the overall app experience rather than as isolated

service failures. This underscores the importance of closing the knowledge gap in service (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985; Wirtz and Lovelock, 2022) and for service providers to better understand the needs of users before loading multiple services in a super app.

4.1.2 *Time*. The second significant theme was “time” and encompassed the concepts of “prayer” (42%), “open” (42%), “widget” (39%) and “update” (23%). Reviewers emphasized the importance of being able to access prayer times on the halal lifestyle super app:

The latest update removed my prayer times widget. There’s a new one, but it’s too big, and it’s always stuck on loading and never shows the prayer times.

The latest update now moved the widget for prayer time to only Premium users.

Plus, the widget for prayer times is locked for fajr and maghrib which means you cannot see it if you open the apps first.

Collectively, these comments illustrate how changes to prayer time accessibility are perceived as serious service disruptions. This theme matters to users because prayer timing is a non-negotiable religious obligation. Users interpret inaccuracies, delays, or restricted access to prayer time widgets as service failures rather than minor inconveniences. The strong reactions observed in the reviews indicate that prayer time functionality is treated as a core indicator of functional service quality and religious reliability.

This interpretation can be understood in light of the centrality of prayer in Muslim daily life. The “time” theme also intersects closely with the “adhan” and “premium” themes, as restrictions or technical failures related to prayer timing are exacerbated when access is perceived to be monetized or notification mechanisms fail. Indeed, its prominence supports the concept of the prayer being central to a Muslim’s lifestyle in all service environments (Noor *et al.*, 2024). Accordingly, prayer services and their facilitation are expected by halal markets in various industries, including halal pharma (Ratnawati and Kholis, 2019) and Muslim-friendly travel (Jeaheng *et al.*, 2020).

4.1.3 *Ads*. “Ads” was the third most significant theme and included the concepts of “ad” (50%), “annoying” (50%), “free” (43%), “Qalbox” (24%) and “pro” (19%). Users expressed their expectations of being able to use a super app that was ad-free and questioned the customer-centricity of the organization that favored the implementation of ads for apps:

I paid 30€for lifetime ad free subscription and now they are showing ads in Qalbox. I don’t want Qalbox, can you stop showing me Qalbox and ads on that.

The number of ads is just incredibly annoying. Every click can sometimes cause an ad to be invoked!

The owner is trying to get rich without helping fellow brothers and sisters.

This theme reflects experiential service quality concerns rather than functional performance issues. Users interpret intrusive advertisements as a violation of fairness and user-centric values, particularly when ads persist despite paid subscriptions. Emotional language such as “annoying” and moral framing related to exploitation indicate that advertising practices directly influence trust and ethical evaluations of the app. Notably, dissatisfaction with ads intensifies when viewed in conjunction with the “premium” theme, suggesting that experiential disruptions are amplified by perceived inconsistencies in value exchange. This theme captures how users expect self-service digital platforms to offer services without interruption and intrusiveness (He *et al.*, 2017). The presence of multiple ads can reduce the efficiency and availability of the electronic service functions intended by the user, further deteriorating service quality (Parasuraman *et al.*, 2005).

Importantly, user reactions also reflect an implicit recognition of the tradeoff between free access to religious services and the need for platform monetization. While users acknowledge that advertising may support free service provision, dissatisfaction arises when commercialization is perceived to undermine religious functions or violate expectations of ethical restraint in halal digital environments. This highlights a tension between economic sustainability and values-based service expectations that is specific to faith-oriented super apps.

**4.1.4 Premium.** The next significant theme was “premium” and encompassed the concepts of “paid” (39%), “subscription” (34%), “user” (34%) and “version” (33%). App users acknowledged the significance they attached to having a premium membership and its associated benefits in the halal lifestyle super app:

I am a paid premium user.

I really like this app and have been using the premium version for years, but I’m confused as to why ads are now appearing in my app.

Now I have the issue that after I paid for subscription, I still did not get any profile updated to premium and ads were kept.

This theme matters to users because it reflects perceived fairness and value exchange. Users expect premium status to deliver consistent benefits, particularly ad-free experiences. When expectations are unmet, dissatisfaction arises not from payment itself but from perceived inconsistency between promised and delivered service quality. Such inconsistencies often manifest alongside intrusive advertising and access barriers, linking the premium theme closely with concerns reflected in the “ads” and “account” themes. This theme is associated with the level of customization halal lifestyle super app users expect, particularly if they have signed up as premium members. Indeed, the ability to personalize and optimize the service environment according to user preferences is in tandem with how customers evaluate digital service platforms (He *et al.*, 2017; Lin and Hsieh, 2011).

Beyond dissatisfaction, the findings suggest that perceived fairness in premium subscription models plays a critical role in shaping users’ trust and continued engagement with the platform. Prior research on digital subscription services indicates that fairness, transparency and clarity of entitlements are key determinants of customer loyalty and willingness to maintain paid relationships over time (He *et al.*, 2017; Fang *et al.*, 2024). In the context of halal lifestyle super apps, premium membership functions as a signal of reciprocal commitment, where users accept payment in exchange for enhanced control, personalization and protection from intrusive monetization. When these expectations are violated, users’ evaluations of the app often shift from transactional dissatisfaction to broader experiential judgments, as reflected in the “better” theme.

From an Islamic service perspective, expectations surrounding premium fairness are further amplified by ethical principles that emphasize justice (*‘adl*), transparency and the avoidance of exploitation (*gharar*) in commercial transactions (Dusuki and Abdullah, 2007; Wilson and Liu, 2011). When premium entitlements are perceived to be violated, users may interpret this not merely as a technical or service failure but as a breach of ethical conduct, which can undermine relational trust and loyalty. This suggests that, in halal digital service environments, perceived fairness in subscription-based models is closely linked to long-term customer loyalty and the sustainability of user–platform relationships.

**4.1.5 Adhan.** The fifth theme “adhan” consisted of the following concepts: “notifications” (37%), “issue” (11%), “problem” (10%) and “fix” (5%). Users emphasized the importance of having high-quality adhan features on their app:

Instead of adhan, the phone's notification tone is audible. Please help fix this issue.

I just want to hear the adhan. But the notifications have become redundant.

The only issue I have now is that I can't get the actual adhan to work. I get a default notification instead of the adhan.

This theme is the second most salient theme related to the faith-based needs of Muslim users and once again concerns the prayer. Specifically, users expect that the super app is capable of giving appropriate call-to-prayer notifications. Failures in adhan delivery are therefore interpreted not merely as notification errors but as disruptions to core religious practices, reinforcing concerns observed in the "time" theme. The degree of importance given to the design interface is pertinent and associated with the super app as a self-service technology (Lin and Hsieh, 2011) and the need for the digital interface to be appealing and clear in facilitating the intended service (Noor *et al.*, 2021). Together with prayer time accuracy, adhan reliability forms a faith-critical functional cluster in which technical malfunctions have amplified effects on overall service quality perceptions. This theme is also closely linked to the "time" prayer theme but further emphasizes the importance of a mechanism to alert users for prayers as users can lose sense of the real world when interacting in immersive digital environments (Noor *et al.*, 2024).

4.1.6 *Read*. The sixth theme "read" included the concept of "reading" (12%), prayers (8%) and "feature" (5%). Users commented on how they appreciated the ability to manage and track the reading of supplications or dua as well as the Quran via the app:

It also gives you dua you can read, and you can also make your own khatam – you only have to select the surah you decide and a goal to set to complete your khatam.

I would love to see some improvement in tracking my reading because it does not show me the last verses I read.

Not showing correctly in reading plan. Although I already read the juz, it's showing only not read.

After the themes associated with prayers and adhan, the reading of the Quran is the third most salient theme associated with halal-friendly services. This theme matters because it supports sustained religious engagement. Users value continuity, progress tracking and personalization in their spiritual practices. Errors in tracking diminish perceived usefulness and reduce trust in the app's reliability as a religious companion. Such reliability concerns mirror functional breakdowns observed in the "time" and "adhan" themes, indicating that faith-related features are evaluated collectively rather than in isolation. The ability to carry the Quran digitally via an app may be more favored by users as opposed to having a physical copy made available by a service provider (Shnyrkova and Predvoditeleva, 2022). In addition, while Berakon *et al.* (2023) found that the level of religiosity, including Quran reading, did not directly affect the intention to use digital halal tourism apps, our study lends support to the importance of Quran reading in forming positive service quality attitudes for halal lifestyle super apps. This agrees with recent research that suggests the relatively consistent effects of religiosity on service quality over technology acceptance (Noor, 2024, 2025).

4.1.7 *Phone*. The seventh theme "phone" encompassed the concept of "work" (9%) and "keeps" (3%). Super app users shared the following comments which reflected the relationship between the phone performance, compatibility and perceptions of the app:

I can only get them to work when my phone is not on silent. However, on my previous Samsung S6 Edge phone this didn't seem to be a problem.

It says that I don't have a compass on my phone, so it couldn't find the Qibla.

One problem I face is that qibla doesn't work without GPS even though I have a compass sensor in my phone.

Users interpret hardware or sensor incompatibility as functional service breakdowns. This highlights that service quality perceptions extend beyond the app itself to its interaction with device-level technologies. Such compatibility issues directly affect the reliability of faith-critical functions, reinforcing service failures observed in the “time,” “adhan” and “read” themes. This theme emphasizes the importance of the usability of such a digital platform and the need for the various supporting hardware and software to connect with ease (Yang *et al.*, 2005). When device-level constraints disrupt core religious features, overall app evaluations tend to decline, linking technical compatibility with broader experiential judgments captured in the “better” theme. The perceived technology compatibility of the mobile phone has also been shown to affect the degree to which users may enjoy service performances in the mobile context (Tan and Chou, 2008).

*4.1.8 Useful.* The eighth theme “useful” includes the concept of “features” (10%). Mobile app users expressed how they valued the usefulness of the different features that were available in the super app:

Found it extremely useful, especially during Ramadan.

Very useful app, especially as a reminder for Muslims to pray.

It is still the most useful Muslim app out there for me.

While usefulness is a key factor for consumers to accept technology platforms (Davis *et al.*, 1989), including in the context of halal industries (Noor, 2024), user perceptions of usefulness in halal lifestyle super apps appear to be cumulative rather than feature-specific, emerging from the reliable integration of prayer, adhan and Quran-related functionalities. This theme can also influence the perceived performance of internet-connected systems (Yang *et al.*, 2005). In addition, perceived ease of use, which is an antecedent to perceived usefulness (Davis *et al.*, 1989), has been shown to affect the service quality of Islamic banking retailing systems (Tabash *et al.*, 2019). Accordingly, perceived usefulness reflects an overarching evaluation that synthesizes functional reliability and experiential reassurance observed across earlier themes.

*4.1.9 Account.* The ninth “account” theme included the concept of “tried” (13%). Here, the users shared their expectations of how the connection between the super app and user accounts should be done intuitively and without any difficulties:

I guess they have trouble connecting to Google account.

Over the last couple of years, I have been blocked out, and my account is not recognized as being linked with mobile number.

Very disappointing. Here is why: you have to make an account! Which if you ask me, it's obviously not necessary.

Users associate account friction with loss of autonomy and control, which negatively affects perceived service quality in self-service environments. This theme emphasizes the convenience that users expect in being able to access such information, which often requires the connection of different web-based services (Yang *et al.*, 2005). Account-related barriers also intersect with concerns identified in the “premium” and “phone” themes, as access failures undermine paid entitlements and disrupt the use of core religious features. The inability to optimize their accounts and feeling coerced to create one can also lead to a lack of

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perceived control, which is a critical factor for the service quality of self-service platforms (Dabholkar, 1996).

4.1.10 *Better*. The tenth theme “better” consisted of the concept of “experience” (8%). Users provided useful performance comparisons and emphasized the importance of continuous quality improvements of the popular super app:

It was much better earlier. I am very disappointed with this commercialization.

I don't like the interface. I feel the previous one was better.

I expected better functionality, especially given its popularity.

Users access service quality dynamically by comparing current and previous app versions. Declines in usability or perceived commercialization led to negative experiential evaluations. These comparative judgments often synthesize accumulated dissatisfaction related to advertising intrusiveness, premium fairness and declining reliability of core features, rather than reflecting isolated interface concerns. The ability to use a super app with better features reflects the importance of the relative advantage that users seek from carrying out tasks with the platform (Loiacono *et al.*, 2007). Accordingly, expectations of “better” performance capture users’ holistic evaluations of whether the app continues to support their halal lifestyles effectively over time. Specifically, users expect that the app will allow them to better manage their halal lifestyles and stay ahead in terms of its system updates and benefits.

4.1.11 *Thank*. The final eleventh theme was “thank” and was associated with the concept of “team” (5%). Super app users expressed their gratitude to the developers for giving their attention to users in improving the app and solving any challenges that users were facing:

Thank you for your great support.

Thank you to the development team for fixing the issue.

Hope this can be fixed. Thank you.

This theme reflects how users would have the propensity to express gratitude as a result of using halal super apps of superior quality. Expressions of gratitude typically emerge following successful service recovery or responsiveness, often after issues related to functionality, access, or premium entitlements have been addressed. This factor goes beyond the traditional consequences of service quality, such as satisfaction, perceived value and customer loyalty (Noor, 2025), and represents feedback that can be useful for service providers in the mobile service environment (Tan and Chou, 2008). Accordingly, gratitude can be interpreted as an affective indicator of restored trust rather than a standalone evaluation.

In addition, while gratitude is more related to the outcome of service quality, based on the service-profit chain (Heskett *et al.*, 1994), it also reflects users’ recognition of responsiveness and ethical conduct, reinforcing experiential evaluations associated with the “better” and “premium” themes. It is reasonable that such signals captured from app users serve as service quality inputs to further motivate halal lifestyle brands and developers to design better super apps.

Taken together, the 11 themes reveal that users evaluate halal lifestyle super apps through a combination of functional reliability and experiential reassurance. This evaluation follows a layered service quality logic in which faith-critical functionalities form the foundational expectations of the platform. Themes related to prayer time accuracy, adhan notifications and Quran reading reflect a set of faith-anchored functional attributes that extend beyond conventional digital service quality dimensions. In contrast, themes such as “ads,”

“premium,” “better” and “thank” reflect experiential evaluations associated with fairness, trust, emotional reassurance and responsiveness. Importantly, these functional and experiential dimensions are interdependent, as failures in faith-critical functions often trigger experiential dissatisfaction, while effective recovery and ethical responsiveness can restore trust. This distinction provides an empirical basis for examining how halal-specific contexts reshape established service quality frameworks, which are further discussed in the theoretical implications section.

#### 4.2 Sentiment analysis

We further conducted a sentiment analysis of the reviews in our study using Leximancer to better understand the attitudes of users. Importantly, the sentiment analysis reinforces the functional–experiential distinction identified in the thematic analysis. As seen in [Table 1](#), positive terms such as “good,” “helpful,” “easy,” “accurate” and “fast” align closely with functional attributes related to reliability, usability and performance. In contrast, negative terms such as “annoying,” “disappointed,” “frustrating” and “worst” correspond predominantly with experiential concerns such as intrusive advertising, perceived unfairness in premium services and unresolved issues. This pattern indicates that functional reliability generates positive sentiment, while experiential disruptions trigger negative emotional responses, thereby deepening understanding of how users evaluate service quality in halal lifestyle super apps.

### 5. Discussion and conclusions

#### 5.1 Discussion

The purpose of this study was to identify the key service quality attributes valued by users of halal lifestyle super apps. Guided by this objective, the findings reveal 11 themes that collectively reflect how users evaluate service quality in this context. As summarized in [Table 2](#), these themes cluster into two overarching categories that parallel established digital service quality frameworks: functional and experiential attributes. Functional attributes relate to the operational performance of the app, including accuracy, reliability, compatibility and usefulness ([Baquero, 2021](#); [Roa et al., 2021](#); [Steinberg et al., 2022](#)), while experiential attributes concern perceptions of fairness, trust, transparency and developer responsiveness ([Zhu et al., 2023](#); [Fang et al., 2024](#); [Hasselwander, 2024](#); [Lucas and Lopes, 2024](#)).

**Table 1.** Top 10 positive and negative sentiments of halal lifestyle super app users

Positive terms	Score	Negative terms	Score
Good	10.67	Problem	9.51
Great	10.11	Annoying	9.37
Best	9.02	Disappointed	8.11
Helpful	8.69	Frustrating	7.98
Easy	8.28	Wrong	7.86
Accurate	8.02	Bad	7.70
Nice	8.00	Difficult	7.36
Excellent	7.94	Disappointing	7.27
Happy	7.49	Worst	7.01
Fast	7.39	Sad	6.85

**Source(s):** Created by the authors

**Table 2.** Mapping of emergent themes to service quality attribute types

No.	Emergent themes in halal lifestyle super app	Description	Service quality attribute type
1	App	Overall user perception of the app's core features, breadth of functions and ease of use	Functional
2	Time	Accuracy, accessibility and display of prayer times	Functional (specifically associated with faith-based need)
3	Adhan	Reliability and quality of call-to-prayer notifications	Functional (specifically associated with faith-based need)
4	Read	Ability to access, track and manage Quran reading and supplications	Functional (specifically associated with faith-based need)
5	Phone	Compatibility of the app with different mobile devices and operating systems	Functional
6	Useful	Perceived usefulness of app features in supporting daily life	Functional
7	Account	Ease of account setup, login and integration with other platforms	Functional
8	Ads	Intrusiveness and frequency of advertisements affecting user experience	Experiential
9	Premium	Perceived value, fairness and benefits of paid membership	Experiential
10	Better	Comparative assessment of perceived quality improvements between new and previous versions	Experiential
11	Thank	Expressions of gratitude for developer responsiveness and service improvements	Experiential

**Source(s):** Created by the authors

This classification provides a coherent structure through which the research question can be directly addressed.

Within the functional attribute category, seven themes (“app,” “time,” “adhan,” “read,” “phone,” “useful” and “account”) reflect users’ expectations of seamless, accurate and relevant service delivery. A key insight lies in the centrality of faith-related functions such as prayer times, adhan notifications and Quran-reading tools. The themes “time,” “adhan” and “read” demonstrate that these religious utilities are treated as essential service features rather than supplementary elements (Noor, 2022). This aligns with findings in halal tourism (Jeaheng *et al.*, 2020) and halal pharmaceuticals (Ratnawati and Kholis, 2019). In the context of super apps, the prominence of these themes indicates that religiosity-driven features form a core dimension of functional service quality. This extends existing digital service quality models such as E-S-QUAL and M-S-QUAL, which do not explicitly incorporate religious requirements as functional criteria (Parasuraman *et al.*, 2005; Huang *et al.*, 2015). Service quality attributes like accurate prayer times (“time”) and Quran-related tools (“read”) not only enhance consumer satisfaction but also align with state-led goals of fostering digital inclusivity and religiously compliant innovation in Muslim-majority markets such as Malaysia and Indonesia (HDC, 2023). By contrast, in Muslim minority contexts such as Europe or North America, the emphasis may shift toward community-building and personalization, where experiential attributes like “premium” and “ads” become central to sustaining user trust.

The prominence of prayer-related features suggests that religiosity operates as a functional service quality driver rather than merely a values-based or attitudinal factor.

Unlike conventional digital services where functional attributes are evaluated primarily in terms of efficiency and convenience, halal lifestyle super app users assess functionality through the lens of religious obligation and spiritual continuity. Features such as adhan notifications and prayer time accuracy therefore carry heightened evaluative weight because service failure directly disrupts religious practice and spiritual rhythm. This finding aligns with religiosity theory, which posits that religious commitment shapes cognitive and behavioral evaluations, and extends service quality models by demonstrating that spiritual facilitation can function as a core determinant of perceived service quality in faith-based digital environments (Noor, 2022; Noor *et al.*, 2024). Emerging literature on Islamic technology also emphasizes that digital tools supporting worship must uphold accuracy, trustworthiness and reverence to be perceived as legitimate extensions of religious practice rather than neutral service utilities (Wilson and Liu, 2011; Noor, 2022; Noor *et al.*, 2024).

Beyond faith-based functions, the themes “app,” “phone,” “useful” and “account” highlight the importance of technical reliability and system integration. Users expect the app to operate smoothly across devices, provide clear navigation and ensure frictionless account access, reflecting principles identified in research on self-service technologies and mobile service systems (Dabholkar, 1996; Yang *et al.*, 2005). These expectations also reinforce the need for developers to manage feature integration carefully to avoid excessive complexity or feature overload, a challenge well-noted in recent studies on super app usability (Zhu *et al.*, 2023; Fang *et al.*, 2024).

Experiential attributes form the second major category through which users evaluate halal lifestyle super apps. In particular, themes related to “ads” reveal an explicit tension between commercial monetization strategies and users’ expectations of moral restraint and religious sensitivity in faith-based digital services. Users’ negative reactions to intrusive advertisements reflect not only annoyance but also ethical judgment, especially when religious utilities are perceived to be compromised by commercial content. This suggests that, in halal digital contexts, advertising practices are evaluated as part of experiential service quality and are subject to expectations of fairness, moderation and values alignment (He *et al.*, 2017; Wan Ismail *et al.*, 2024). The “premium” theme further illustrates this monetization–expectation tension. Users’ dissatisfaction is not driven by payment itself but by perceived inconsistency between paid status and actual service delivery. Premium membership is expected to safeguard religious and functional features from commercial intrusion, leading to heightened expectations of ethical treatment and service integrity. From a service quality perspective, this challenges assumptions in digital service models that equate payment with increased tolerance for complexity or advertising, suggesting instead that, in halal contexts, premium status amplifies expectations of fairness and trust (Fang *et al.*, 2024).

The themes “better” and “thank” further enrich experiential evaluations. “Better” reflects users’ dynamic and comparative assessment of service quality over time, indicating that service quality perceptions are formed longitudinally rather than at a single point. Declines in usability or perceived commercialization therefore trigger negative evaluations even when core functionality remains intact, aligning with the concept of relative advantage in digital service adoption (Loiacono *et al.*, 2007). The “thank” theme captures expressions of gratitude directed at developers, signaling positive emotional responses associated with responsiveness and attentiveness. This highlights gratitude as an affective outcome of perceived service quality and as a feedback signal that extends beyond traditional outcomes such as satisfaction and loyalty (Barrett *et al.*, 2015; Wan Ismail *et al.*, 2024).

Taken together, the synthesis of functional and experiential attributes demonstrates that service quality in halal lifestyle super apps is defined by the intersection of operational performance, religious utility and ethical user experience. While general super app literature

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highlights convenience, integration and usability (Baquero, 2021; Roa *et al.*, 2021; Steinberg *et al.*, 2022), the findings of this study show that Muslim users in addition evaluate service quality through the lens of religious appropriateness and perceived fairness. This positions halal lifestyle super apps as a distinct category within digital service environments and suggests the need for service quality models that incorporate both faith-based functional expectations and experiential principles grounded in trust, privacy and ethical engagement.

Finally, platform governance, policy compliance and data ethics are also emerging priorities in digital Islamic service environments. While functional attributes such as usefulness and accuracy drive adoption, user trust is equally dependent on whether platforms comply with data privacy regulations and uphold Islamic ethical standards in data usage (RABIU *et al.*, 2025). Governance and ethics should therefore be seen as core components of halal service quality, shaping both functional trust and experiential loyalty.

### 5.2 Theoretical implications

This study makes three key theoretical contributions. First, it conceptualizes service quality in halal lifestyle super apps as a dual structure of functional and experiential attributes, where faith-critical features such as prayer time accuracy and adhan reliability function as core functional drivers rather than peripheral compliance elements. Second, it demonstrates that religiosity reshapes the hierarchy of digital service quality dimensions by embedding spiritual continuity within everyday functional evaluations, thereby extending established digital service quality models to faith-based platform contexts. Third, it shows that experiential factors such as advertising intrusiveness, premium fairness and user gratitude operate as ethical and affective mechanisms that shape longitudinal service quality assessments beyond static satisfaction-based models.

The findings of our study further validate the theory surrounding the composition of service quality dimensions and how the set of factors can change as a result of the service environment (Rust and Oliver, 1994). By classifying user-valued attributes into functional and experiential attributes, our results confirm that the salience of each dimension is context-specific. Our findings reveal that faith-related (e.g. “adhan” and “time”) and platform-related (e.g. “phone”) emerge as central to functional performance, while perceptions of fairness, trust and responsiveness (e.g. “ads,” “premium” and “thank”) shape experiential evaluations. These findings affect the service quality attributes that matter to users and support the definition of halal lifestyle super apps proposed in our study. This also brings continued relevance to the importance of the service quality literature as an important research stream and the continuous need to accurately measure the expectations of users who can experience a multitude of service environments in their daily lives.

Beyond confirming the relevance of functional and experiential attributes, this study advances service quality theory by demonstrating how halal-specific contexts reshape the meaning and hierarchy of these dimensions. Existing service quality models such as SERVQUAL, E-S-QUAL and SSTQUAL conceptualize functionality primarily in terms of efficiency, system availability and ease of use. However, the prominence of prayer time accuracy, adhan reliability and Quran-related features in our findings suggests that faith-based utilities operate as core functional service quality attributes rather than as peripheral or compliance-related add-ons. This extends existing models by showing that, in halal digital service environments, religiosity is embedded within everyday functional expectations and directly shapes how service quality is evaluated (Parasuraman *et al.*, 2005; Lin and Hsieh, 2011; Huang *et al.*, 2015).

Our study also contributes to the Islamic marketing literature and answers the call for a better understanding of how dimensions unique to halal markets manifest in the context of

different service agents (Noor, 2025). While recent studies have highlighted the importance of digital technologies for halal food businesses (Bahara *et al.*, 2025), and the need for halal food is more salient in website reviews related to halal tourism (Arasli *et al.*, 2021), our research indicates that attributes associated with prayer (i.e. “time,” “adhan”) and Quran (i.e. “read”) are particularly relevant for halal lifestyle customers using super apps. These attributes introduce a religiosity dimension that is tangent to the “Compliance” dimension in the CARTER model (Dandis and Wright, 2020) and thus challenge conventional service quality models involving digital interfaces (Huang *et al.*, 2015; Lin and Hsieh, 2011; Parasuraman *et al.*, 2005). These suggest new service quality attributes and motivate research to better understand the underlying theoretical mechanisms as to why selected faith-based needs become more salient in specific service environments including in the context of repeat usage (Anggraeni *et al.*, 2024).

In addition, experiential themes such as “better” and “thank” reveal temporal and affective dimensions of service quality that remain under-theorized in existing models. The “better” theme reflects users’ dynamic and comparative evaluation of service quality across different app versions, challenging the assumption that service quality perceptions are static or formed at a single point in time. Meanwhile, the “thank” theme highlights gratitude as an effective response that signals trust, reassurance and perceived responsiveness from the service provider. Together, these findings suggest a feedback-oriented extension to traditional service quality outcomes such as satisfaction and loyalty, particularly in digital and faith-based service environments where emotional reassurance and responsiveness play a central role.

### 5.3 Managerial implications

The themes in our study can be used by service managers and app developers to guide the design and benchmarking of the super app for their halal markets. For instance, the “app” theme recognizes that conducting proper research as to what customers actually want can be critical to better inform decisions concerning the functions that should be featured in the super app. Such research should include prototyping the super app during the early development stages as well as monitoring and acting upon relevant user feedback once the app has been fully launched.

The “better” theme indicates that users evaluate halal lifestyle super apps comparatively over time, rather than isolated service encounters. For developers, this implies the need for careful change management during updates. Feature removals, interface redesigns or increased monetization should be accompanied by clear communication, optional settings or gradual rollouts to avoid perceptions of declining service quality.

The “thank” theme highlights the importance of perceived responsiveness and issue resolution. Expressions of gratitude were often directed at the development team, suggesting that timely bug fixes, visible responses to user feedback and transparent communication can generate positive emotional outcomes. Developers can operationalize this by implementing in-app feedback loops, visible update logs that reference user concerns and customer support mechanisms that reinforce attentiveness and care.

Our themes also support the notion of how a multistakeholder approach is necessary to creating effective super apps for faith-based services. Similar to the creation of other new emerging digital service environments (Noor *et al.*, 2024), the presence of faith-based attributes such as Quran (i.e. “read”) necessitates that service managers collaborate with experts in the Islamic tradition to ensure that the halal services are accurate and reliable. These shariah scholars and consultants may be involved during the development phase or be

embedded as part of an advisory board to support the super app throughout its implementation.

Beyond operational design, the findings also suggest pathways for competitive differentiation in the halal digital economy. Unlike secular super apps, halal lifestyle super apps can achieve competitive advantage by embedding values-driven features such as transparent premium models, ad-free religious utilities and shariah-compliant data governance. Positioning a super app as both functionally superior (accurate prayer tools, seamless account integration) and ethically trustworthy (responsible data use, compliance with Islamic law) allows firms to capture both rational and emotional loyalty. This dual positioning provides a clear market differentiation strategy in increasingly competitive halal digital ecosystems.

#### 5.4 Policy and regulatory implications

The findings indicate that halal lifestyle super apps operate within a regulatory space where digital service governance intersects with religious oversight, particularly for features associated with prayer times, adhan notifications and Quran-related functions. Users rely on these capabilities as authoritative religious utilities, suggesting the need for stronger policy frameworks that ensure accuracy, ethical data use and compliance with Islamic principles. Importantly, the empirical themes identified in this study point to specific areas of regulatory concern. For example, strong user dissatisfaction reflected in the “ads” theme highlights the need for clearer governance of advertising practices in faith-based digital platforms, particularly where intrusive advertisements interfere with core religious functionalities. This is consistent with broader calls for trustworthy and transparent digital ecosystems that protect consumer rights and reinforce religious appropriateness in service delivery (Noor, 2022; Wan Ismail *et al.*, 2024). Similarly, concerns captured under the “premium” theme suggest that subscription-based monetization models require greater transparency and fairness, indicating a role for consumer protection standards to ensure that paid entitlements are clearly communicated and consistently delivered in halal digital services. Regulatory bodies may therefore play a more active role by establishing verification standards for religious content, mandating transparent data governance and ensuring that monetization strategies align with Islamic ethical expectations, especially given user concerns about intrusive advertising and fairness in premium services.

In addition, the increasing integration of AI and data-driven features in faith-based digital platforms raises new considerations regarding privacy, algorithmic transparency and responsible stewardship of sensitive spiritual data. Issues related to advertising intrusiveness, account management and premium access collectively point to broader concerns of data ethics, particularly in relation to how user data are collected, processed and monetized. Scholars have argued that ethical digital governance should underpin emerging technology use to reduce risks of exploitation and to uphold values such as fairness, responsibility and trustworthiness (RABIU *et al.*, 2025). As Muslim majority countries advance national digital economy agendas and expand halal digital ecosystems, policy makers and Islamic authorities may align technological standards with religious expectations to protect users and strengthen confidence in digital halal services. These regulatory directions broaden the contribution of this study by illustrating how service quality expectations are shaped not only by technical performance but also by governance structures that safeguard both consumer welfare and religious integrity.

#### 5.5 Limitations and future research

There are several limitations to our study. First, our halal lifestyle super app reviews were based on the comments from the Muslim Pro app. This is due to the limited number of super

apps available in the halal lifestyle markets. While the use of one primary app from a single platform as a sample for generalization has been conducted in recent research in the literature on halal apps (Noor *et al.*, 2025), we acknowledge that an analysis of more app brands across other platforms such as the Apple App Store would improve the generalization of our findings. Hence, future studies may analyze other halal lifestyle super apps as more begin to enter and gain popularity in the market to assess if their service quality themes are similar to those uncovered in our study.

While comparisons with other halal lifestyle super apps may result in a greater generalizability of the findings of our study, triangulation with other qualitative methods including in-depth interviews with halal lifestyle super app users and developers can be used in future studies to produce richer insights. In addition, an empirical quantitative study is required to better ascertain and define the dimensions that contribute to the service quality of halal lifestyle super apps. Such scale development studies can help to refine current themes that have overlaps such as “time” and “adhan” which are associated with prayer. While our qualitative analysis has shed light on the service quality attributes of halal lifestyle super apps that mirror the dimensions found in several extant service quality scales, a future quantitative study will be able to better refine the constructs. This will result in the development of more precise measure items that can be used by researchers and developers to accurately measure the service quality dimensions. This will also help to better ascertain if religiosity, in the context of halal lifestyle super apps, is merely a contextual moderator or indeed acts as an embedded functional driver within a multidimensional service quality scale as suggested in our study. Furthermore, a longitudinal study is recommended to capture the evolving dynamics of user perceptions as apps expand functionalities. For instance, tracking user attitudes could illustrate how experiential attributes such as trust and fairness shift over time.

Finally, we encourage future studies to compare our results against super apps that are tailored to other faiths and cultures. As only English language reviews were collected, there may be cultural and linguistic bias associated with the comments and analysis. Accordingly, future research can include an analysis of non-English reviews which can better represent non-English speaking Muslim users in dense Muslim regions such as Southeast Asia and the Middle East. A geographic and demographic breakdown of users’ comments can also help assess for peculiar sentiments from different cultures and profiles, including possible negative effects of such digital environments on users (Suhud *et al.*, 2024b). Insights can also include how super apps may be better developed to meet the needs of communities who are traditionally marginalized by such digital innovations. This will further enrich the literature on super apps to address other sustainable lenses, including user well-being, and provide clearer directions for developers serving different markets.

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**Further reading**

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**Table A1.** Super app definitions and service quality aspects

Author	Summarized definition	Service quality aspects	Attribute type	Relevance to halal super apps
Baquero (2021)	Marketplace platform integrating diverse products and services	Seamless user experience; integrated payments; convenience	Functional	Smooth navigation, Shariah-compliant payments and convenient access to Islamic and lifestyle services
Roa <i>et al.</i> (2021)	Single app satisfying multiple daily needs without extra downloads	Delivery; transportation; financial services	Functional	Halal-certified food delivery, Muslim-friendly transport and Islamic banking in one platform
Steinberg <i>et al.</i> (2022)	Multi-service “do-everything” platform with regional variations	Chat-based, delivery-based, or family app model	Functional	Integrated Islamic content, halal commerce and lifestyle utilities in one interface
Zhu <i>et al.</i> (2023)	Unified app delivering multiple services and functions	Trust; habit; inertia; relative advantage; perceived fit;	Experiential	Shariah compliance builds trust; daily religious tools encourage habit; privacy ensures ethical use
Fang <i>et al.</i> (2024)	Swiss-Army Knife-like interface for diverse activities in One app	External prestige; brand competence; complementarity; compatibility; perceived fit	Experiential	Recognized halal certification, competent service delivery and device compatibility
Hasselwanger (2024)	All-in-one personalized service platform	Ride sharing; food/grocery delivery; payments	Functional	Halal-certified food/grocery delivery, gender-sensitive ride sharing, Islamic finance payments
Lucas and Lopes (2024)	Closed ecosystem integrating multiple features across industries	Digital platforms; closed ecosystem; differentiated UX; marketplace; OS mimicry	Functional (digital platform integration) and experiential (differentiated user experience)	Closed halal service ecosystem, familiar interface, integrated religious and lifestyle tools
van der Vlist <i>et al.</i> (2024)	Intensified appification integrating services via multiple models	Swiss-Army Knife; family-style; host; hub	Functional	Embedding, integrating, or connecting halal-certified services via various platform models

**Source(s):** Created by the authors