

The Legal Politics of Halal Tourism in Indonesia: The Impact of Digital Advertising Interventions on Consumer Preference, Recommendations, and Engagement in the Digitalization Era

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Abstract: This study explores the legal politics of halal tourism in Indonesia by highlighting the impact of digital advertising interventions on consumer interest, recommendations, and engagement. As one of the leading global tourism destinations, Indonesia is increasingly developing its halal tourism sector due to its significant potential to become a “halal tourism and Muslim-friendly” country. However, realizing this potential faces challenges in aligning the needs of Muslim tourists with effective digital marketing strategies. This research analyses how digital ads can influence consumer perceptions and interest, particularly in the era of globalization and digital transformation. Using a normative-empirical approach, the study draws on data from literature reviews, including an analysis of Indonesian government policies related to halal tourism and other official supporting literature. The findings show that appropriate digital advertising interventions can boost Muslim tourists' interest in visiting, encourage positive recommendations, and enhance consumer engagement. Additionally, supportive legal policies promoting halal tourism are crucial in creating competitive appeal in the global market. The results contribute to a deeper understanding of the legal politics of halal tourism in Indonesia, while offering strategic recommendations for the government and industry players to leverage digital advertising in supporting the sector's growth. The implications of this research are also relevant for building a sustainable halal tourism ecosystem amidst the dynamics of the digitalization era.

Keywords: Legal Politics, Halal Tourism, Digitalization.

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A. INTRODUCTION

The World Tourism and Travel Council (WTTC) defines tourism as all activities carried out by individuals who travel and stay for less than one year in a location different from their usual environment, whether for recreation, business, or other purposes (Jayakody et al., 2024, p. 11). Individuals traveling to foreign countries or distant destinations for personal, professional, or commercial reasons represent the social, cultural, and economic phenomenon known as tourism (Adham et al., 2024, p. 237). The tourism sector has now transformed into one of the fastest-growing pillars of the global economy and makes a significant contribution to global economic growth. In recent decades, halal tourism has emerged as a crucial component of this industry, in line with the increasing number of Muslim travellers worldwide (DinarStandar, 2023). Research by Elpa Hermawan also indicates that halal tourism has become an important segment of the global tourism industry, driven by growing demand from Muslim travellers seeking destinations that accommodate their specific needs,

such as halal food, modest dress, sharia-compliant accommodations, and prayer facilities (Hermawan, 2019, pp. 91–92).

Indonesia, as one of the tourist destinations in Southeast Asia, holds significant potential in developing the halal industry, considering its position as the country with the largest Muslim population in the world. According to the *Global Muslim Population* report published by Times of Prayer, the Muslim population in Indonesia reaches 245.02 million out of a total population of 281.6 million (Times, 2025). This potential for the halal industry spans various sectors, including food and beverages, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, tourism, modest fashion, Muslim-friendly travel, pharmaceuticals, and other sectors that comply with halal standards in accordance with Islamic teachings. This data is drawn from the State of the Global Islamic Economy Report 2023/2024 (Dinar Standar, 2023).

Halal tourism in Indonesia has become an increasingly relevant topic in legal and political studies, particularly in the context of preparing for the development and marketing of halal tourism to support sustainable development in Indonesia. Through its tourism institutions, the Indonesian government has built a vision in the tourism sector: “To Become a World-Class Halal Tourism Destination.” GMTI 2019 data indicates that by 2030, the number of Muslim travellers is projected to reach 230 million globally. Ten leading halal tourism destinations that continue to be developed in Indonesia are: the *Great Jakarta* cluster (including the Special Region of Yogyakarta, Central Java, Riau, and Riau Islands), *East Java*, *West Java*, and *Jakarta*. The *Great Batam* cluster consists of Aceh and West Sumatra, while the *Great Bali* cluster includes South Sulawesi and Lombok in West Nusa Tenggara (Madani, 2021). To achieve this target, the government is implementing strategies to enhance destination aspects through digital advertising for branding Indonesia's halal tourism.

As described above, halal tourism is not limited to the provision of worship facilities or halal food but also includes the delivery of services that are friendly to the values and preferences of Muslim tourists. Therefore, the government, through the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy and related institutions such as BPJPH and MUI, is committed to playing a significant role in supporting the development of the halal industry especially in the tourism sector highlighting its great potential in contributing to sustainable development (SDGs) (Siregar & Ritonga, 2021). This commitment includes initiating various policies and programs to strengthen Indonesia's position as a world-class halal tourism destination. In this context, halal tourism is not only a technical issue or an economic opportunity but also a strategic instrument for cultural diplomacy and the strengthening of national identity.

In the context of halal tourism, there is a strong political-legal interest from the state. This is evident in the emergence of various regulations, affirmative policies, and strategic programs aimed at strengthening halal tourism destinations in Indonesia. For example, Law No. 33 of 2014 on Halal Product Assurance serves as the legal foundation that enhances the certainty &

credibility of halal services, including in the tourism sector. Additionally, the establishment of the Halal Product Assurance Agency (BPJPH) and inter-ministerial cooperation are proof of the political will to make Indonesia the center of the global halal industry.

Furthermore, the legal and political interests surrounding halal tourism can also be interpreted as part of the state's effort to respond to global developments while expanding the economic and cultural influence of Indonesian Islam at the international level. Within the framework of sustainable development, halal tourism is not merely seen as an economic endeavour but also as a geopolitical strategy, a marker of national identity, and a state cultural project. This is supported by an integrative legal development strategy that consciously and fundamentally aims to shift the economic legal system long dominated by liberalism and developed countries towards one characterized by familialism or *ukhuwah* (brotherhood). This economic legal system based on familial values not only emphasizes the rule of law but also places strong attention on the rule of morals, ethics, and justice. In other words, the direction of legal-political policy is not solely oriented toward digital modernization and development but also considers harmonization with local laws and traditional values that live within regional communities (Sulistiyono, 2007, p. 28).

On the other hand, the massive development of digital technology over the past decade has transformed how states and industry actors promote tourism destinations. Interventions via digital advertising ranging from social media campaigns, official websites, to collaborations with Muslim influencers have become primary strategies. In this sense, digitalization in halal tourism is not just about introduction but also about widely disseminating the beauty of tourism to reach global Muslim travellers, especially the younger generation that is highly connected to the digital world (Kemenparekraf&Baparekraf, 2021). This strategy marks a shift from conventional promotion to an approach based on algorithms, visuals, and digital engagement. However, this strategy cannot be separated from the framework of legal policies and interests that govern it. The use of digital media by state institutions, whether directly or in collaboration with private parties, creates a new space filled with challenges, including the legitimacy of messages, protection of Muslim consumers, and the alignment of content with sharia principles and national law.

Based on the above review, it is therefore important to examine in depth how Indonesia's legal politics shape the direction of halal tourism development, and how digital advertising interventions influence the intentions, recommendations, and engagement of Muslim travellers in this digital era. This study is not only academically relevant but also practically important for policymakers, industry actors, and the wider society.

B. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of the legal-political dynamics and digital promotion strategies in the development of halal tourism in Indonesia. The research focuses on analyzing policies, digital promotional content, and publicly available supporting data sourced from official government and tourism agency platforms. Data for the study is collected through three main methods: Literature review, digital content analysis, and policy analysis.

The literature review is conducted to examine various scientific literature, policy documents, and academic publications relevant to halal tourism, digital promotion, and the legal politics of the tourism sector. Digital content analysis is performed on promotional materials disseminated through official government websites such as kemenparekraf.go.id and indonesia.travel, as well as official social media channels like the Ministry of Tourism's Instagram and YouTube accounts. The study observes the types of messages conveyed, the visual and narrative forms used, and the level of audience engagement generated. Through this approach, researchers can identify digital promotion patterns aimed at attracting Muslim tourists, both domestic and international. Policy analysis is then conducted to review the strategies, regulations, and initiatives implemented by Indonesian authorities in support of the halal tourism sector. This approach is expected to provide a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the relationship between the needs of Muslim tourists, government policies, and digital promotion strategies within the context of halal tourism in Indonesia.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Legal Politics in the Development of Halal Tourism in Indonesia

Legal politics plays an important role in influencing the development of halal tourism in Indonesia. In the global context, halal tourism has become one of the fastest-growing industries, prompting various countries, including Indonesia, to adopt policies that attract Muslim tourists (Rahayuni, 2025). Indonesia has demonstrated strong political and legal commitment to developing halal tourism as part of its national sustainable development strategy. This commitment is reflected in the presence of various regulations such as Law No. 33 of 2014 on Halal Product Assurance and the establishment of institutions such as the Halal Product Assurance Organizing Agency (BPJPH), which collaborates with the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) in issuing halal certifications for tourism industry players. Other supporting regulations include Law No. 10 of 2009 on Tourism, and local regulations that govern halal tourism, such as West Nusa Tenggara Provincial Regulation No. 2 of 2016 on Halal Tourism, Bandung Regency Regional Regulation No. 6 of 2020 on Halal Tourism, and Aceh Jaya Regency Qanun No. 10 of 2019 on Halal Tourism.

However, Indonesia still lacks a specific regulation that governs halal tourism. Currently, the regulation of halal tourism in Indonesia is still based on Law No. 33 of 2014 on Halal Product Assurance, Law No. 10 of 2009 on Tourism, and various local regulations. As a result, Indonesia does not yet have a strong legal framework for the development of the halal tourism sector. The development of the halal tourism sector will not be optimal without clear regulation. In fact, there are many elements involved in halal tourism. These include the regulation of halal tourism destinations, halal travel agencies, halal tour guides, types of recreation offered in halal tourism, halal food, and others. This situation raises serious questions regarding the synergy and political will of the central government (Al Hasan, 2017, p. 61).

In this digital era, government policies related to the licensing and supervision of digital advertisements are also necessary, as it is important to ensure that halal tourism promotions are not only attractive to tourists but also align with local ethical values and applicable laws. With a clear legal framework, the effectiveness of legal politics can be seen in how the

implemented regulations are able to sustainably support the growth of this sector. This study shows that proactive policies supporting the promotion of halal tourism through digital advertising can have a positive impact on the sector's growth. A supportive approach through proper digital advertisement regulation can broaden the reach of information about halal destinations while ensuring that the conveyed messages do not violate Islamic principles. By utilizing digital technology, Indonesia has great potential to widely promote halal tourism destinations and increase the appeal to Muslim tourists from around the world. Therefore, it can be concluded that this legal politics is based on the desire to affirm Indonesia's identity as the largest Muslim-majority country in the world, and to enhance its economic competitiveness based on Islamic values.

Furthermore, the efforts to develop halal and Muslim-friendly tourism destinations initiated by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (Kemenparekraf) reflect strategic planning in state policy. The cooperation among various stakeholders shows that, besides being a form of state recognition of Muslim tourists' needs, it also demonstrates how law is positioned as a tool to direct the development of the tourism sector in accordance with Sharia principles.

2. Digital Intervention Strategies in Promoting Halal Tourism

Halal tourism in Indonesia is still not widely known, resulting in limited awareness of the concept among both domestic and international tourists. Therefore, more intensive efforts are needed from the government to strengthen the image and introduce the halal tourism brand to the public. However, this responsibility does not lie solely with the government. The active role of the community, especially the tech-savvy younger generation, is also crucial. In today's digital era, every individual has the opportunity to convey messages to a global audience through the internet, which serves as a cross-border communication platform. This potential can be maximized to promote Indonesian halal tourism on an international scale.

From a communication science perspective, the concept of digital marketing communication has emerged a strategy that utilizes digital media to deliver relevant, personalized, and timely messages to consumers. This approach integrates psychological, humanistic, anthropological, and technological elements, resulting in a new media form that is interactive and has broad outreach. Compared to conventional marketing methods, digital marketing communication has the advantage of reaching audiences without geographical or time constraints. This transformation has also changed the dynamics of the relationship between consumers and producers, where consumers are now not only targets but also key actors in a company's business development (Kusumaningtyas et al., 2024, p. 139).

In the book by Muhammad Nizar et al. (Nizar, Muhammad, Ririn Tri Ratnasari, 2023, p. 92), Mahfud Achyar, an expert in this field, highlights several important steps in planning a digital strategy. First, identifying and understanding the target consumers for halal tourism. Second, building strong relationships with consumers through effective digital platforms. Third, influencing consumer perceptions and increasing brand awareness. Fourth, utilizing data and analytics for more targeted strategies. Fifth, optimizing consumer engagement through social media. Sixth, managing online reputation and public relations in the digital era.

Seventh, combining affiliate marketing with strategic partnerships. Eighth, prioritizing mobile-based marketing considering consumer mobility. Ninth, integrating gamification elements to enhance marketing appeal. Lastly, planning and evaluating digital campaigns to ensure a positive Return on Investment (ROI) and accurate reporting.

Within the framework of digitalization, the Indonesian government, particularly the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (Kemenparekraf), has leveraged digital media as a key promotional tool. Content analysis from official websites such as indonesia.travel, and platforms like Instagram (@kemenpar.ri) and YouTube (Wonderful Indonesia), reveals that digital campaigns feature elements consistent with halal tourism principles: the availability of prayer facilities, halal food, and local cultures aligned with Islamic values. Campaigns such as #WonderfulIndonesia, #HalalTourismIndonesia, and #MuslimFriendlyDestination have also been used to build an inclusive and Muslim-friendly narrative. Visual content such as cinematic videos, testimonials from Muslim travelers, and promotions of religious events demonstrate efforts to evoke emotion and shape a positive perception of Indonesia's tourist destinations.

3. The Impact of Digital Advertising on Muslim Consumer Preferences, Recommendations, and Engagement

Strategically managed digital advertising contributes to three key aspects of muslim tourist behaviour:

a. Consumer Prefences

Consumer preference refers to the tendency or choice made by individuals when deciding on products or services offered, based on their perceptions, needs, values, and experiences. In the context of halal tourism, consumer preference reflects the inclination of Muslim travellers in selecting destinations, accommodations, cuisine, and tourism activities that align with Sharia principles.

Amidst the advancements of a digitally connected era driven by big data, the role of advertising becomes vital in capturing the attention and interest of tourists toward certain destinations. As one of the world's leading tourist destinations, Indonesia leverages various digital platforms such as social media, video streaming services, and advertising applications, which have revolutionized local tourism promotion strategies. Specifically, in the context of halal tourism which provides services and facilities in accordance with Islamic teachings, there is increasing attention to the needs of muslim travellers. Various studies show that digital advertisements featuring Islamic symbols, such as mosques, halal-certified food, prayer facilities, and religious activities, can significantly influence Muslim travellers' interest in visiting Indonesia, including areas with high tourism potential that are majority non-Muslim. Ads that are attractively and informatively packaged, while explicitly incorporating Islamic values, have proven effective in building that interest (Amalia et al., 2024, p. 4). Visuals such as grand mosques, enticing halal food, and narratives that highlight convenience and comfort for Muslim tourists play a major role in capturing their attention. This approach allows digital advertising to create strong emotional connections with

potential travellers, while also providing a sense of security and assurance that their spiritual and practical needs will be met during their trip (Ferdiansyah, 2020, p. 33).

Consumer preferences are also influenced by elements of trust and comfort. Muslim travelers tend to favor destinations that consistently demonstrate alignment with Islamic values for example, restaurants displaying halal certification logos from MUI or BPJPH, destinations that emphasize cleanliness, gender-separated facilities, scheduled prayer times incorporated into tour plans, and the absence of alcohol promotions or entertainment conflicting with Sharia norms. In the long term, value-based and consistent digital promotion will build brand loyalty and a strong halal destination image. This becomes a crucial asset for developing a sustainable market in the Muslim tourist segment, both domestically and internationally.

b. **Consumer Recommendations and Their Impact on the Image of Destinations**

Travel intention is a crucial stage in the consumer decision-making process. In the context of tourism, this intention refers to an individual's psychological drive to visit a destination after receiving certain information or stimulus one of which comes from digital advertising. This intention does not arise spontaneously; rather, it is shaped by a combination of perceptions about the destination, personal values, and the degree of trust in the information received.

In the context of promoting halal tourism in Indonesia, digital advertising managed by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (Kemenparekraf) plays a vital role in shaping Muslim travellers' intentions. Official digital content disseminated through platforms such as indonesia.travel, Instagram, YouTube, and collaborations with global Muslim influencers strategically blends narratives of inclusivity, natural beauty, local culture, and spiritual values. These narratives not only demonstrate that destinations in Indonesia are accommodating to Muslim travellers' needs (such as the availability of mosques, halal restaurants, and sharia-compliant accommodations), but also build an emotional connection with potential visitors. When values such as spiritual tranquility, local hospitality, and respect for diversity are consistently emphasized, the intention to travel increases significantly, as travelers feel both valued and understood in terms of their identity and beliefs.

Moreover, this intention extends beyond individual action and develops into social intention the desire to share experiences and recommend the destination to others, particularly through social media. In today's digital era, travelers are not merely consumers of information but also prosumers actively producing content. They share their spiritual journeys, visuals of halal cuisine, and the comfort of their travels through positive reviews and testimonials on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and YouTube. This activity contributes to shaping Indonesia's image as a leading halal tourism destination and reinforces the confidence of prospective travelers that their expectations will be met. Visual content, such as photos, videos, and user stories shared on digital platforms fosters curiosity and trust among new audiences. Therefore, utilizing high-quality, engaging digital advertising becomes an effective strategy to stimulate consumer recommendations. To maximize its impact, destinations like

Indonesia must continuously adapt and refine their digital marketing strategies to remain relevant amid evolving digital trends and the shifting needs and preferences of their audiences (Suud et al., 2024).

c. Consumer Engagement

Consumer participation in the digital era has significantly evolved, no longer limited to simply visiting websites or viewing advertisements. Findings in this study indicate that meaningful engagement is reflected in users' active actions, such as sharing content, writing comments, and participating in quizzes or competitions organized by tourism industry players. These forms of interaction demonstrate a deeper level of engagement and can foster stronger bonds between brands and their consumers.

Therefore, promotional strategies that emphasize enhancing digital interaction are crucial for reaching and retaining a wider and more sustainable audience. Through digitalization, Indonesia actually has the opportunity to harness advanced technologies via innovative approaches, one of which is the use of Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) in its marketing campaigns. These technologies enable prospective tourists to experience the atmosphere of a destination as if they were physically there, without ever leaving their homes. Through such immersive experiences, consumers can explore the halal tourism locations being offered. This strategy has already been implemented by Thailand, where potential travellers can virtually experience the uniqueness and beauty of halal destinations and gain deeper understanding of the available services serving as a form of virtual survey before deciding to travel.

Thailand has demonstrated success in integrating cutting-edge technologies to create immersive tourism experiences, leave a lasting impression, and build strong emotional connections with travellers. As technology continues to advance and consumer preferences evolve, countries aiming to compete in the global tourism industry are required to constantly innovate their marketing approaches. The application of AR and VR technologies as part of interactive promotional campaigns proves that technology can serve as a strategic tool to increase audience engagement (*AR & VR - Thailand, 2024*). These findings confirm that investing in digital technologies not only enhances user participation but also motivates them to move further along in the travel decision-making process. For Thailand, this innovative approach has not only strengthened the appeal of halal tourism but also opened opportunities to reach broader and more diverse markets, while solidifying its position as a progressive and responsive destination for modern travellers.

Reflecting on the success of Thailand's strategy, Indonesia could consider optimizing its own marketing strategy by adopting best practices from other tourism-supportive countries. Although the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (Kemenparekraf) already utilizes social media, promotional videos, and influencers to boost the appeal of halal tourism, the use of advanced technologies like AR/VR remains limited to small-scale projects such as VR promotional videos by local communities or specific tourism startups. A national-level program that promotes the integration of AR/VR into halal destination branding is still lacking.

4. Challenge and Opportunities in Strengthening Legal Politics and Digitalization

Although digitalization offers great opportunities to promote halal tourism, its implementation in Indonesia still faces various structural and normative challenges. First, there is a fragmentation of policies across regions, where each province or area has different approaches to tourism promotion without coordinated integration. This creates gaps in the quality of digital content, promotional infrastructure, and the visibility of halal destinations in cyberspace. As a result, some prominent destinations become less known due to weak local digital strategies. Second, the lack of a national standard for digital halal tourism promotion leads to inconsistencies in message delivery. For instance, the use of the term and visualization of “halal” varies across platforms, causing confusion among consumers, especially international tourists who need clarity and certainty of information. Without uniform guidelines, the halal narrative built through digital content becomes vulnerable to bias, making it difficult to ensure that each message truly represents the principles of Sharia recognized by certification authorities like BPJPH or MUI. Third, the limited use of big data from the digital activities of Muslim tourists poses a serious barrier in developing evidence-based policies. The government has not fully optimized the development of tracking systems for consumer behavior from social media, review platforms, or tourism apps. In fact, click patterns, digital visit durations, search keywords, and content interactions are valuable for understanding the interests, concerns, and expectations of Muslim tourists towards specific destinations. Without this data, promotional strategies and regulations tend to be reactive and not contextual.

Nevertheless, there remains great potential if the government can align its digital strategies with a progressive and adaptive legal framework in response to the dynamics of information technology. This includes developing national regulations for digital halal promotion, halal certification for digital promotional content, and strengthening Sharia digital literacy for tourism industry players. Furthermore, legal politics that synergizes with digital strategies will strengthen Indonesia's position globally as a pioneer of technology-based halal tourism. The central government, through the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (Kemenparekraf), can build a collaborative ecosystem with relevant ministries, industry players, academics, and the Muslim digital community to create a standardized, inclusive, and responsive halal promotion platform for global tourist needs. With the integration of strong legal policies and adaptive digital innovation, Indonesia will not only enhance its competitiveness in the halal tourism industry but also strengthen its image as a global leader in modern, technology-friendly, and values-based Sharia tourism.

D. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This study shows that legal politics and digital marketing play a crucial role in driving the growth of the halal tourism sector in Indonesia. With its significant potential as a global halal tourism destination, Indonesia can leverage digital advertising interventions to increase

Muslim tourists' interest, encourage positive recommendations, and enhance consumer engagement. However, this success heavily depends on the synergy between supportive legal policies for halal tourism and effective digital marketing strategies. Legal policies that align halal regulations with the needs of digitalization are vital in creating competitive advantage in the global market. Supporting local industry players to adapt to digital technology will enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of marketing and services offered to Muslim tourists.

This research contributes to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of legal politics in the development of halal tourism in Indonesia and how digitalization can support the sustainability of this sector. The implications of these findings are also relevant to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in creating inclusive, sustainable tourism based on halal values that benefit all stakeholders. Thus, the integration of policies supporting halal tourism and targeted digital marketing strategies will be the key to successfully developing Indonesia's halal tourism as a leading destination in the global market.

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