

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN PROMOTING MOUNT KAWI AS AN INDONESIA HALAL TOURIST DESTINATION

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Abstract - *This research deeply examines the potential of Pesarean Gunung Kawi, a historical and religious site in Indonesia, as a halal tourism destination. Through a qualitative approach, this research reveals how social media can be utilised as an effective tool to promote the site to global Muslim travellers. The findings show that Pesarean Gunung Kawi has unique characteristics that fit the demands of halal tourism. However, challenges such as limited infrastructure and lack of targeted promotion hinder its full potential. This research highlights the important role of social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok in increasing the visibility of the site and attracting Muslim tourists. By analysing the effectiveness of various social media strategies, this study contributes to the growing literature on halal tourism and digital marketing. The findings offer valuable insights for policy makers, tourism stakeholders, and local communities seeking to develop sustainable and inclusive tourism destinations. This research makes a unique contribution by identifying specific strategies that can be implemented to overcome these challenges, as well as highlighting the importance of involving local communities in the tourism development process.*

Keywords: *Halal Tourism, Social Media, Wonosari Village, Kawi Mountain Shrine, Promotion.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the important sectors contributing to the country's economic income. Tourism is also a sector that is able to increase Regional Original Income (PAD) in addition to being a medium of diplomacy for a country. (Irma & Yani, 2019). The development of the community's need for tourism or traveling activities *currently* has a very high interest. Domestic tourism activities have also grown very rapidly with many new destinations that meet the needs of the community. Moreover, the need for tourism from the Muslim community is also an increasing part. This is proven by the many provisions of Sharia hotels or food using the halal logo. Thus, halal tourism has become an inevitable need for the people of Indonesia or abroad (Hermawan, 2019).

Halal tourism has now become a very promising global trend. In the coming year, it is projected to continue to grow. Based on the 2019 *Mastercard-Crescent Rating Global Travel Market Index* (GMTI) Report, the number of Muslim tourists in the world in 2020 is projected to reach 160 million with a total spending of USD 220 billion, with market growth reaching 27% per year. This growth will continue to increase to USD 300 billion

in 2026. Based on the 2019 GMTI Report, Indonesia currently ranks first as the best halal tourist destination in the Organization of

Islamic Conference countries that are widely visited by Muslim tourists in the world (Sutono et al., 2019).

Branding is a powerful marketing tool to promote a tourist destination. Through branding, a destination can create a positive perception in the minds of tourists and encourage them to choose that destination. This is what Indonesia did by developing a halal tourism strategy, which successfully positioned the country as a leading Muslim tourist destination. To compete in the increasingly competitive world of tourism, branding is the main key. With branding, destinations can create a strong image and differentiate themselves from competitors. Indonesia's halal tourism strategy is a clear demonstration of how effective branding can increase the attractiveness of a destination and attract certain market segments.

In the increasingly tight competition in the tourism industry, halal tourism destinations are required to appear different and captivate the hearts of tourists. One of the keys to success is through strategic use of social media. Social media, with its wide and interactive reach, offers great opportunities for halal tourism destinations to connect directly with their target audience. In other words, social media currently has quite high control and enough power to influence the public that cannot be done by an organization. In addition, technological advances can make information spread widely and quickly so that the public can find out various information about a product or service before potential consumers determine and buy the product (Adona et al., 2022).

Halal tourism can be a superior economic potential in increasing state revenue from the tourism sector because it has high development prospects. (Ferdiansyah et al., 2020). The Ministry of Tourism provides a reporting format to halal tourism destinations. The implementation of halal tourism destinations is carried out based on criteria, including: (i) territory, (ii) tourist attractions, (iii) public facilities, (iv) tourism facilities, (v) accessibility, (vi) investment, and (vi) government support (Sutono et al., 2019).

The people of Malang are generally familiar with the use of social media as well as for the introduction of various tourist attractions through social media. Including in one of the villages located in Wonosari District which has its own charm at Pesarean Gunung Kawi which is located in the village. However, Pesarean Gunung Kawi has not received much special attention to be promoted to the outside community so that many visitors do not know the tourist attraction as well as the place of pilgrimage. Because the village community is still unfamiliar with the importance of promotion that can be done through social media, the tourist attraction is not known for sure by the outside community, especially outside Malang Regency.

Pesarean Gunung Kawi, with its high historical and religious value, has great potential to become a popular halal tourism destination. Social media as a digital platform offers great opportunities for tourism destinations to reach a wider target audience. In an

effort to achieve wider reach, this study will examine how digital platforms can be used to increase the visibility of Pesarean Gunung Kawi as an attractive halal tourism destination for Muslim tourists from various parts of the world.

There are several studies related to this research, including: *First*, the research of Fitri Adona, Yusnani, and Sri Nita (Adona et al., 2022), Virtual Ethnography "Halal Tourism Padang": City Branding Case Study. In this paper, the authors apply a virtual ethnographic case study in response to various texts and discursive interpretations of city branding communication related to the language approach in communal discussions, and determine the social or cultural environment that influences the selection of social media, messages, and promotional activities used in building brand awareness. This study concludes that the social and cultural environment significantly influences the use of #padanghalaltourism, especially those that reflect Islamic culture. User motivations for posting include sharing information, seeking engagement, and convenience, but the overall impact on branding is limited. This hashtag is primarily used for self-presentation, with users focusing on personal identity rather than promoting the concept of halal tourism. This study emphasizes the need for more strategic and engaging content to increase the effectiveness of city branding efforts. Future research should explore ways to encourage community engagement and develop a more cohesive branding strategy for Padang City.

Second, the research of Ega Dwi Sahputri, Siti Sarah, Aulia Ari Ananda, Rizki Dani Kusuma, Fani Hatja Nurhayati, and Salman Abdul Muthalib (Dwi Sahputri et al., 2023), Social Media

Management as a Digital Marketing Strategy in Halal Tourism Development in Gampong Keude Unga. In this paper, the effectiveness of using social media (instagram, tiktok and youtube) and conventional media (pamphlets) in increasing the number of visitors to the three tourist attractions mentioned. This study concludes that effective digital content can significantly increase tourism promotion in Keude Unga. Interesting and informative social media content can attract visitors and stimulate local economic growth. This study emphasizes the importance of strategic planning and community involvement in tourism promotion. Future efforts should focus on refining content strategies and expanding reach to maximize tourism potential.

Third, Putri Linggasari Sofi's research, Ratih Hendayani (Sofi et al., 2023), Exploring Indonesian Halal Tourism Tweets on Social Media Using Topic Modeling and Emotion-Based

Sentiment Analysis. In this article, the author uses topic modeling and sentiment analysis using the NRC Lexicon to explore halal tourism in Indonesia with the intention of knowing the topics discussed and knowing the sentiment of the Indonesian people about halal tourism. This study concludes that there is a positive public sentiment towards halal tourism in Indonesia, which is supported by topic modeling and sentiment analysis. This study identified seven main topics that reflect public discourse on halal

tourism, which emphasize the importance of halal practices in the tourism sector. These findings indicate that despite some challenges, the potential for halal tourism in Indonesia is quite large, so it needs to be explored and developed further. Future research can expand the implications of these findings for policy making and business strategies in the halal tourism industry.

Fourth, the research of Md Siddique E Azam, Betania Kartika Muflih, M Ashraf Al Haq (Azam et al., 2024), *Intersection Between Modern Technologies and Halal Tourism: Exploring the Role of Digital Innovation in Enhancing Muslim Travellers' Experience*. In this article, discusses the intersection of modern technologies and halal tourism offers unprecedented possibilities for Muslim travellers. It enhances convenience, accessibility, and cultural enrichment through digital platforms, applications, and forums. The study highlights the transformative impact of digital innovation on halal tourism, which enhances the Muslim traveler experience. Digital platforms simplify access to information and meet faith-based needs, ensuring a personalized travel experience. Virtual mosque guides and halal food delivery apps support spiritual and dietary needs, enriching the overall journey. AR technology encourages cultural engagement, allowing travellers to connect deeply with their destinations. Online community engagement creates a supportive network for Muslim travellers, enhancing a sense of belonging and shared experiences.

This literature study shows that social media has a huge potential to promote halal tourism in Indonesia. However, the success of the promotion is highly dependent on the quality of the content, the relevance of the message, and community involvement. Further research is needed to develop more effective and sustainable strategies in utilizing social media to achieve halal tourism goals.

2. METHOD

Since this research is conducted directly in the field and involves direct interaction with the community, this research will use the *Field Research method*. By using a qualitative approach, because this approach allows researchers to dig deeper into the meaning and experience of research subjects related to the promotion of halal tourism through social media. This is very important to understand the cultural, social, and religious nuances that surround this phenomenon.

This activity was carried out from July 11, 2024 to August 23, 2024 and was located in the Pesarean Gunung Kawi area, Wonosari Village, Wonosari District, Malang Regency, East Java. Participants who carried out this activity were KKN 114 students, group 272, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, which consisted of 10 people. The stages in this activity consist of 7 stages, namely: field survey, coordination with the Malang Regency Tourism Office, interviews with relevant figures, taking photos and videos, editing content and writing articles, determining social media platforms and article websites, and publication. Each stage is interrelated and requires careful planning. For example, the results of the field survey will be the basis for compiling interview questions and determining the point of view that will be raised in the content. The process of editing

content and writing articles also involves indepth analysis of the data obtained, so that the message conveyed can be more effective and interesting.

The involvement of the Malang Regency Tourism Office in every stage is very important to ensure that this activity is in line with the vision and mission of regional tourism development. In addition, interviews with the relevant figures provide a broader and deeper perspective on the potential for halal tourism in the area. Given the limited budget, photos and videos were taken using smartphones and pocket cameras. However, maximum efforts were made to produce attractive and informative visuals. The results of the shots were then edited using simple software to produce quality visual content.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Through KKN activities, researchers have the opportunity to conduct intensive field tests in the Pesarean Gunung Kawi area, so that they can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the potential for halal tourism in the location. This study uses qualitative methods by conducting participatory observations and in-depth interviews with the surrounding community, religious leaders, tour guides and tourism actors in the Pesarean Gunung Kawi area during the KKN period.

Gunung Kawi Cemetery as a Halal Tourism Destination

Pesarean Gunung Kawi has high historical and religious value, especially for the Balinese Hindu community. These values can be an attraction for Muslim tourists who are interested in history and culture. The beautiful natural scenery around Pesarean Gunung Kawi can be an additional attraction for tourists. There are several supporting tourism facilities around Pesarean Gunung Kawi, such as parking lots, food stalls, toilets, and lodging. Access to Pesarean Gunung Kawi is quite easy, either using private vehicles or public transportation.

The local government has shown interest in developing Pesarean Gunung Kawi as a halal tourism destination. The community around Pesarean Gunung Kawi generally supports the development of tourism in the area. The development of halal tourism in Pesarean Gunung Kawi can have a positive impact on the economy of the surrounding community. However, the promotion of Pesarean Gunung Kawi as a halal tourism destination is still not optimal. Supporting facilities for halal tourism, such as restaurants that provide halal food, are still limited. The workforce who have the knowledge and skills to manage halal tourism is still limited. There are some people who still have a negative perception of tourism development in the cemetery area.

The development of Pesarean Gunung Kawi as a halal tourism destination not only has an impact on improving the economy of the surrounding community, but can also strengthen Indonesia's image as a country that is friendly to Muslim tourists. In addition, the development of this halal tourism can be a model for the development of other halal tourism destinations in Indonesia.

Using Social Media as a Branding Tool

Social media is currently a very effective platform to reach a wide audience, including potential tourists. The purpose of using social media in tourism promotion is to facilitate the delivery of information to the public who have now turned to social media. The content used must also contain *informative* and *persuasive* (Dwi Sahputri et al., 2023) meaning .

Informative text aims to convey information objectively, accurately, and completely to the reader without any element of persuasion. Meanwhile, persuasive text aims to influence the reader's attitude, opinion, or action through the use of emotional language and strong arguments. In the world of marketing, persuasive text is often used in advertisements to persuade consumers to buy certain products, while informative text is used to provide detailed product information.

To promote Pesarean Gunung Kawi we utilize various existing features, such as uploading high-quality photos and videos that display the natural beauty, unique architecture, and spiritual atmosphere of Pesarean Gunung Kawi. In addition, you can also write interesting and informative narratives, such as history, uniqueness, and facilities available for halal tourists.

In developing halal tourism, an appropriate marketing strategy is needed, one of the marketing strategies that can be relied on in the modern era today is by using social media marketing such as Instagram, Tiktok, Youtube (Dwi Sahputri et al., 2023). Therefore, researchers utilize the Instagram and Tiktok platforms to increase awareness of the potential for halal tourism in the Gunung Kawi Pesarean Area and attract Muslim tourists to visit through interesting content that highlights the uniqueness of its cuisine and culture. In addition, researchers also utilize article/news websites to present more complete and in-depth information about the history, culture, and attractions of halal tourism in the area, as well as increase the visibility of the area through search engine optimization (SEO).

The use of social media in promoting Pesarean Gunung Kawi as a halal tourist destination is not only limited to delivering information, but also involves direct interaction with the audience. Interactive features such as *comment* , *share* , and *direct message* allow potential tourists to ask questions, provide input, or even share their experiences. This creates a more personal relationship between the tourist destination and tourists. In addition, the use of hashtags Relevant keywords such as #halaltourism, #pesarengunungkawi, and #halaltourism can increase content reach and make it easier for potential tourists to find the information they need.

Data analysis from social media is very important to measure the effectiveness of the branding strategy that has been carried out. By monitoring metrics such as *engagement rate* , *reach* , and *conversion rate* , we can identify the most effective content and make adjustments to the strategy if necessary. Personalizing content based on audience interests and behavior is also becoming increasingly important in today's digital

era. By utilizing the analysis features provided by social media platforms, we can present content that is more relevant and interesting to the target audience.

Maximizing Instagram, Tiktok, and Website Platforms Articles

In the increasingly digital era, social media has become a very effective tool for promoting tourist destinations. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and article websites offer great opportunities for tourism actors to reach a wider audience and build a strong brand image. Through attractive visual content, inspiring narratives, and active interaction with users, tourist destinations can create an unforgettable experience for potential tourists.

Content creation is one of the efforts to promote halal tourism due to the adjustment of the digital era. Content creation aims to be a form of promotion to introduce what attractions are in Wonosari village so as to attract tourists to visit. There are 4 themes that are the focus of content creation, namely tourism, arts, culinary, and MSMEs. News articles also serve as a medium for disseminating information to the public. Through articles that tell the advantages and charms of Mount Kawi, the KKN team aims to attract readers to find out and get to know more about the attractions in Wonosari village. In addition, this article also aims to dispel the negative issues of Mount Kawi that appeared in the news media in 2023.

The final stage of this research is the publication of the content results in the form of video content and news articles. After going through the editing stage, the video content is uploaded to the Instagram and TikTok platforms on the main account of KKN 114 group 272 UIN Sunan Kalijaga. Meanwhile, news articles are published on 2 websites, namely matic.or.id and kompasiana.com. matic.or.id is the official website of the Malang Regency Tourism Intelligence Center (MATIC) which provides comprehensive information about smart tourism in the Malang area. This site provides large data related to the tourism sector, as well as various resources that are useful for tourists. On the other hand, kompasiana.com is present as a citizen journalism platform that is open to anyone to share stories and opinions, including about tourism. Thus, these two sites have different but complementary roles in providing information and insight about tourism in Indonesia, especially in the Malang area.

The area for information mining as well as taking videos and images for content and articles covers 4 hamlets in Wonosari Village. The KKN team was divided into several groups to conduct interviews as well as taking videos and images in stages starting from August 10, 2024. The results of taking videos and images produced 8 contents that describe the potential and uniqueness of Wonosari Village.

There are 5 articles written by the KKN team. 3 articles entitled "Retro Vibes Alert: Diving into Mr. Rikat's Collection of Hundreds of Antiques", "Pesarean Gunung Kawi Shows the Beauty of the Blend of Three Cultures: Islam, Java, and Chinese", and "Local

UMKM, Pillar of Village Economy" were published through the Kompasiana.com website and 2 other articles entitled

"Knitting a Sustainable Future in Wonosari with Timeless Art Heritage" and "Potential of Wonosari Village to Become a Halal Tourism Destination" were published through the website of the Malang Regency Tourism and Culture Office called matic.or.id. The information used in writing the articles was taken directly from sources from Wonosari Village.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study successfully shows that social media, especially Instagram and TikTok, have an important role in promoting Pesarean Gunung Kawi as a halal tourism destination. With the right approach, social media can increase the visibility and attractiveness of this site to global Muslim tourists. However, there are several limitations such as inadequate infrastructure and limited promotion. This study also has implications for the development of halal tourism as a whole, both in terms of government policies and local community participation. For further research, it is recommended to further explore more specific marketing strategies and efforts to develop infrastructure that supports halal tourism. For policy makers, it is important to increase collaboration with local communities in developing this destination to make it more inclusive and sustainable.

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