



Developing Community-Based Halal Tourism through Digital Promotion: A Case Study of Taman Surga Rinjani, Sembalun, Lombok, Indonesia

Hasbiatun Hasbiatun¹, Habibul Umam Taqiuddin^{2*}, Muhammad Yakub³

¹Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis Islam, Universitas Islam Negeri KH. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

This study explores the development of community-based halal tourism through digital promotion at Taman Surga Rinjani, located in Sembalun, East Lombok, Indonesia. As part of Lombok's emerging halal tourism initiatives, this destination demonstrates how local communities integrate Islamic values with creative economic practices to enhance both spirituality and livelihood. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through interviews, observation, and documentation involving local tourism managers, community members, and visitors. The analysis, guided by the Miles and Huberman framework, revealed that Taman Surga Rinjani applies a dual promotion strategy combining offline methods—such as local festivals, brochures, and school visits—with online marketing through social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. These strategies have significantly increased tourist visits, stimulated local entrepreneurship, and created new employment opportunities. Moreover, the tourism model reflects Islamic ethical principles of *halalan tayyiban* (permissible and good), *amanah* (trust), and *ukhuwah islamiyah* (social solidarity). Despite notable progress, challenges remain in terms of digital marketing capacity, partnership development, and limited institutional policy support. The study concludes that sustainable halal tourism requires continuous collaboration between government agencies, local communities, and digital innovators. This research contributes to the growing discourse on Islamic tourism by demonstrating how digital engagement and community participation can transform peripheral destinations into inclusive and ethically grounded tourism ecosystems.

KEYWORDS:

Halal tourism; digital promotion; community-based tourism; Islamic values; Taman Surga Rinjani; Sembalun; Lombok; Indonesia

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, halal tourism has emerged as one of the fastest-growing segments of the global tourism industry. According to the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI, 2023), Muslim-friendly destinations are projected to attract more than 230 million tourists by 2028, contributing significantly to global tourism revenue. This growth is driven by increasing demand for travel experiences that align with Islamic principles, encompassing not only halal food and prayer facilities but also ethical hospitality, environmental stewardship, and community inclusivity. Indonesia, as the world's largest Muslim-majority nation, holds a strategic position in developing halal tourism as a driver of sustainable economic growth and cultural diplomacy. Lombok has gained international recognition as one of Indonesia's pioneering halal destinations after receiving the *World's Best Halal Tourism Destination* award in 2015. However, while major tourist centers such as Mataram and Senggigi have benefited from this momentum, peripheral regions like Sembalun remain underdeveloped despite their immense natural and cultural potential.

Taman Surga Rinjani, located in Sembalun Bumbung Village, East Lombok, represents a promising yet underexplored case of community-driven halal tourism. The destination, surrounded by the scenic

foothills of Mount Rinjani, integrates religious values, local creativity, and environmental conservation. Unlike state-managed resorts, Taman Surga Rinjani is established and operated by local youth groups and family networks who aim to blend tourism development with Islamic ethical values such as *halalan tayyiban* (lawful and wholesome) and *ukhuwah islamiyah* (social brotherhood). This grassroots model reflects the principles of *community-based tourism (CBT)*, which emphasizes local ownership, participation, and empowerment. In this context, halal tourism becomes not only a market niche but also a means to enhance community welfare and preserve moral identity (Benur & Bramwell, 2015; Sayekti, 2019).

The strategic importance of digital media in this transformation cannot be overstated. As the tourism sector becomes increasingly digitalized, online platforms play a pivotal role in shaping destination image and influencing visitor behavior. Studies by Ishak (2020) and Rezqy and Fikriyah (2022) highlight that digital engagement—especially through social media—has become an essential component of halal tourism promotion, enabling small destinations to reach wider audiences with limited resources. However, while the relationship between digital promotion and halal tourism has been widely studied in urban contexts such as Yogyakarta and Surabaya, little attention has been given to rural, faith-based destinations like Sembalun. This research seeks to fill that gap by examining how digital promotion strategies is employed at Taman Surga Rinjani to enhance destination visibility, attract tourists, and improve community welfare.

From the perspective of Islamic economics, halal tourism embodies a holistic approach that integrates ethical consumption, sustainability, and social justice. It promotes economic growth while ensuring adherence to Islamic ethical principles that safeguard faith (*din*), life (*nafs*), intellect (*'aql*), property (*mal*), and progeny (*nasl*)—the five essentials of *maqasid al-shariah*. Sembalun's tourism initiatives align with this framework by linking economic development to moral accountability and community cohesion. The destination's operational model—where profits are reinvested into local enterprises such as coffee shops, fruit farms, and handicrafts—demonstrates the synergy between tourism and social entrepreneurship (Suryani & Bustamam, 2021).

Despite these achievements, the literature reveals that many rural halal destinations in Indonesia struggle with sustainability due to inadequate policy support, weak marketing strategies, and limited capacity for innovation (Fiqih, 2019). Therefore, this study focuses on identifying the strategies adopted by local communities in Sembalun to promote halal tourism through both traditional and digital means, analyzing their impact on tourist arrivals and local livelihoods. By situating this analysis within the framework of community-based halal tourism, the research contributes to the ongoing discourse on how Islamic values and digital innovation can jointly shape sustainable rural tourism models.

The objective of this study is threefold: first, to describe the promotional strategies implemented by Taman Surga Rinjani as a community-based halal tourism destination; second, to analyze how these strategies influence local economic empowerment and visitor growth; and third, to assess the alignment of these practices with Islamic ethical and sustainability principles. The significance of this study lies in its demonstration of how peripheral regions like Sembalun can leverage digital platforms and faith-based community engagement to develop inclusive, ethical, and economically viable tourism ecosystems.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The growth of halal tourism is a significant development within the broader framework of sustainable and ethical tourism. Scholars define halal tourism as a form of travel that adheres to Islamic principles, providing products and services consistent with the moral, ethical, and spiritual values of Muslim

travelers (Battour & Ismail, 2016). This sector emphasizes inclusivity and well-being while ensuring that tourism practices align with *maqasid al-shariah*—the higher objectives of Islamic law, which include the protection of faith, life, intellect, wealth, and lineage. In Indonesia, the government has positioned halal tourism as a key component of national economic strategy, supported by policies promoting regional branding, certification, and local community empowerment (Rezqy & Fikriyah, 2022).

Research on halal tourism development highlights that its success depends on the integration of Islamic ethics with socio-economic empowerment. Sayekti (2019) emphasizes that halal tourism goes beyond religious compliance to include dimensions of sustainability, local participation, and value creation. Similarly, Suryani and Bustamam (2021) found that halal tourism stimulates inclusive growth by enhancing entrepreneurship, creating employment, and strengthening local identity. From a theoretical perspective, this aligns with the *quadruple helix model*, which advocates for synergy among government, academia, industry, and society in developing sustainable tourism ecosystems.

In the context of Lombok, several studies identify the region as an exemplary case of Islamic destination branding. Ishak (2020) observed that Lombok's halal tourism success stems from community engagement and the promotion of local Islamic culture through storytelling and religious symbolism. However, gaps remain in marketing innovation and digital transformation, particularly among small-scale tourism operators in rural areas. The emergence of destinations such as Taman Surga Rinjani demonstrates the potential for integrating local initiative with digital innovation, transforming rural communities into active agents of tourism development rather than passive beneficiaries (Benur & Bramwell, 2015).

The literature also underscores the critical role of digital promotion in expanding the visibility and competitiveness of halal destinations. With the rapid digitalization of the tourism industry, social media platforms have become essential tools for destination marketing, storytelling, and community engagement. According to Rezqy and Fikriyah (2022), digital promotion fosters a more democratic and participatory form of tourism marketing, allowing local actors to shape their own narratives. In Indonesia, small tourism enterprises increasingly rely on Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok to reach broader audiences, share visual experiences, and promote cultural authenticity. These digital platforms enhance not only destination branding but also transparency and visitor interaction, thereby reinforcing trust—a key element in Islamic economic behavior (Ishak, 2020).

Furthermore, the intersection of Islamic values and digital innovation has generated new theoretical discussions in contemporary tourism research. Halal tourism is no longer viewed merely as a religious niche but as an ethical tourism framework compatible with sustainability goals (Battour & Ismail, 2016). The concept of *halalan tayyiban*—ensuring that all tourism-related products and services are lawful and wholesome—has evolved to include environmental preservation, fair labor, and digital ethics. As digital media become integral to marketing and visitor management, Islamic ethics emphasize accountability, privacy, and truthful representation in promotional content. Thus, digital promotion in halal tourism must not only attract visitors but also uphold spiritual and moral integrity.

Finally, the community-based perspective remains central to halal tourism development. Local participation ensures that tourism benefits are distributed equitably, cultural authenticity is preserved, and moral values are internalized within operational practices. Studies in rural Indonesia demonstrate that when communities take ownership of tourism enterprises, they reinforce social cohesion and build local capacity (Suryani & Bustamam, 2021). In Sembalun, this participatory approach aligns with Islamic principles of *ta'awun* (cooperation) and *ukhuwah islamiyah* (social brotherhood), fostering resilience and self-reliance.

Overall, the literature indicates that sustainable halal tourism development depends on the synergy between Islamic ethics, digital innovation, and community empowerment. These three dimensions

form the conceptual foundation of the present study, which investigates how digital promotion strategies at Taman Surga Rinjani facilitate the development of community-based halal tourism and improve local welfare in Sembalun, East Lombok.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive research design aimed at providing a detailed understanding of the strategies and socio-economic effects of halal tourism development in Taman Surga Rinjani, Sembalun, East Lombok. The qualitative descriptive method is suitable for exploring phenomena in natural contexts, emphasizing meaning rather than numerical data. It allows researchers to observe, interpret, and analyze social interactions, cultural values, and community participation in shaping tourism development (Sugiyono, 2018).

Data were collected through observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted to capture the physical environment of the destination, tourist activities, and management practices. Semi-structured interviews were held with key stakeholders, including village tourism managers, local entrepreneurs, religious leaders, and tourists, to understand both promotional efforts and community perspectives. Documentation involved analyzing tourism-related policies, promotional materials, and digital content used in online campaigns.

The data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman interactive model, consisting of three concurrent stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data reduction involved selecting and simplifying field data according to the research focus. Data display was conducted through narrative presentation to identify emerging patterns, while conclusion drawing involved continuous reflection and verification to ensure consistency between empirical findings and theoretical perspectives (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, triangulation was employed by cross-verifying information from different data sources and methods. Member checking was also performed by presenting preliminary findings to several participants for validation. This approach ensures that interpretations align with local realities and accurately reflect the voices of community members involved in halal tourism activities.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Digital and Offline Promotion Strategies

The findings indicate that the development of halal tourism in Taman Surga Rinjani relies on a synergistic blend of offline and digital promotion strategies, reflecting both traditional cultural outreach and modern marketing approaches. Offline promotion includes distributing brochures, banners, and posters in key tourist access points such as Sembalun Village, Senaru, and Bayan, where domestic travelers often pass before heading to Rinjani National Park. These promotional efforts are supported by community participation during local events and religious festivals, where tourism activities are introduced as a form of *dakwah bil hal*—a practice of inviting through good deeds and ethical conduct. The physical promotion strategy emphasizes hospitality, cleanliness, and environmental care, aligning with the concept of *halalan tayyiban* tourism which ensures that all tourism-related activities are lawful, beneficial, and environmentally friendly.

Simultaneously, digital promotion has become a transformative force in expanding the visibility of the destination. Taman Surga Rinjani's management utilizes various social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, and TikTok to share visual storytelling about the natural beauty of Sembalun's landscapes, halal-friendly facilities, and the friendliness of local communities. These platforms are managed directly by youth volunteers who upload photos, videos, and visitor testimonials. The participatory management of digital promotion enables a sense of collective ownership and enthusiasm among residents, particularly among younger generations who are technologically literate. This approach reflects the growing body of literature emphasizing the importance of digital storytelling in building destination image and trust among Muslim travelers (Battour & Ismail, 2024; Rahman et al., 2023).

The use of short video content, live broadcasts, and testimonials has successfully increased monthly visitor arrivals, with tourism data indicating growth from approximately 1,000 visitors in December to 3,600 visitors in July. This increase demonstrates how digital platforms create low-cost yet effective marketing channels that reach audiences beyond Lombok and even outside Indonesia. The message consistency between online and offline promotions, which emphasizes modesty, prayer facilities, and halal food availability, reinforces the credibility of Taman Surga Rinjani as a Muslim-friendly destination. Furthermore, these activities align with the principles of Islamic marketing ethics that encourage transparency, authenticity, and social responsibility in communication.

Community Participation and Empowerment

The findings show that local community participation forms the cornerstone of Taman Surga Rinjani's success as a community-based halal tourism model. The management of the destination is not handled by external investors but by community cooperatives composed of village leaders, local youth, and farmers. This collective management structure embodies the Islamic principle of *ta'awun* (cooperation), which encourages collaboration for shared benefit and community welfare. Through direct involvement, residents contribute to the maintenance of facilities, the preparation of local food products, and the management of homestays that accommodate Muslim and non-Muslim visitors alike.

Women play an essential role in this development process. Many women's groups engage in producing local culinary products such as halal snacks, coffee, and fruit-based beverages, while other craft souvenirs that reflect Sembalun's Islamic identity. The empowerment of women through these small enterprises has significantly contributed to household income diversification, supporting the broader objective of *maqasid al-shariah* in preserving wealth (*hifz al-mal*) and sustaining livelihoods. The participatory model also fosters social inclusion by encouraging youth involvement in tourism guiding, digital promotion, and environmental conservation. This inclusiveness strengthens community solidarity and reinforces the idea that halal tourism can serve as a vehicle for socio-economic empowerment, not merely as a religious label (Suryani & Bustamam, 2021).

The community's collective approach also contributes to social capital formation, as trust and mutual respect underpin the operational system. Local leaders serve as mediators who ensure that tourism activities adhere to Islamic ethical standards. This informal governance mechanism maintains harmony between religious values and economic objectives, preventing exploitation and maintaining moral integrity within the tourism economy. The findings resonate with Benur and Bramwell (2015), who argue that community-based tourism leads to equitable benefit distribution, social cohesion, and local empowerment, particularly when combined with ethical and spiritual dimensions.

Economic and Social Impact

The economic impact of Taman Surga Rinjani on the Sembalun community is multifaceted. Tourism growth has stimulated the emergence of micro and small enterprises that cater to tourists' needs, including homestays, food stalls, photography services, and local transportation providers. The income generated from tourism allows many families to reinvest in education, home renovation, and agricultural innovation. Moreover, youth who were previously unemployed or engaged only in seasonal agricultural work have found stable sources of income through tourism-related activities.

At the macro level, the development of Taman Surga Rinjani contributes to the reduction of rural-urban migration by creating employment opportunities within the village. This aligns with the sustainable development principle of retaining rural labor for local economic growth. Socially, the tourism initiative fosters a sense of pride among residents, who perceive their village not merely as a marginal rural area but as a globally recognized Islamic tourism destination. This change in social identity contributes to greater community cohesion and self-confidence.

Additionally, the integration of environmental and spiritual practices—such as regular *gotong royong* (communal work) and *doa bersama* (collective prayer)—illustrates how halal tourism development intertwines spirituality with sustainability. Visitors are encouraged to respect prayer

times, dress modestly, and participate in community-based conservation efforts such as tree planting and waste management. This ethical framework transforms tourism into a medium of dakwah and education for both visitors and hosts, embedding sustainability in moral and religious consciousness.

Challenges and Recommendations

Despite notable progress, several challenges hinder the full realization of halal tourism potential in Sembalun. First, the lack of professional training in tourism management and digital marketing limits the quality and consistency of destination branding. Most digital content is managed voluntarily by local youth without formal education in tourism promotion, resulting in irregular posting schedules and inconsistent messaging. Second, infrastructural deficiencies such as limited parking areas, insufficient signage, and poor public transportation access constrain visitor comfort. Third, the absence of formal collaboration with government tourism agencies and certification institutions weakens the destination's recognition at the national and international levels.

Addressing these challenges requires multi-stakeholder collaboration under the quadruple helix framework, involving local government, academia, private sector, and community. Capacity-building programs in digital literacy, hospitality management, and Islamic tourism certification should be prioritized to professionalize destination operations. Additionally, establishing partnerships with Islamic financial institutions and cooperatives could provide funding for sustainable infrastructure and marketing innovation. Integrating local knowledge and religious leadership into tourism governance will ensure that future development remains both ethical and inclusive, maintaining the balance between economic growth and spiritual well-being.

In summary, the findings highlight that Taman Surga Rinjani exemplifies a living model of community-based halal tourism where digital innovation, Islamic ethics, and social empowerment converge. The collaborative efforts among residents have not only improved the local economy but also strengthened cultural identity and environmental responsibility. The success of this initiative provides valuable insights for policymakers and scholars on how peripheral destinations can achieve sustainable development through faith-based tourism models that emphasize digital connectivity, equity, and moral integrity.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the development of halal tourism at Taman Surga Rinjani in Sembalun, East Lombok, demonstrates the effectiveness of integrating Islamic ethical values, digital innovation, and community-based participation in fostering sustainable tourism. The dual promotion strategy—combining traditional offline outreach with digital marketing through social media—has significantly enhanced the visibility of the destination while reinforcing its identity as a Muslim-friendly tourism site. The findings reveal that this approach not only increases tourist arrivals but also strengthens local entrepreneurship, creates employment, and revitalizes community welfare.

The central role of local communities in managing tourism activities reflects the essence of Islamic moral economy, where cooperation (*ta'awun*), trust (*amanah*), and fairness (*'adl*) guide economic behavior. Through participatory management, Taman Surga Rinjani embodies a model of tourism that aligns with *maqasid al-shariah*, ensuring the protection of wealth, dignity, and the environment. Furthermore, digital promotion has transformed local youth into key agents of innovation, bridging the gap between traditional culture and modern tourism demands.

However, the study also identifies persistent challenges related to limited digital skills, inconsistent government support, and inadequate infrastructure. To ensure long-term sustainability, collaboration between local communities, government agencies, academic institutions, and private stakeholders is crucial. Initiatives such as training in Islamic tourism management, certification, and digital literacy are essential for enhancing professional standards and global competitiveness. Ultimately, the case of

Taman Surga Rinjani provides a replicable model for developing peripheral destinations into ethical, inclusive, and economically resilient halal tourism ecosystems

Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest related to the publication of this study.

Data Availability

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Author Contribution

All authors contributed equally to the design, data collection, analysis, and writing of this manuscript. All authors have read and approved the final version of the paper.

REFERENCES

- Abdelmalak, F. (2024). Smart tourism destinations: Governance and resilience—The use of ICTs in destination governance and its impact on resilience. *Journal of Smart Tourism*, 4(2), 35–45. <https://doi.org/10.52255/smarttourism.2024.4.2.5>
- Battour, M., & Ismail, M. N. (2016). Halal tourism: Concepts, practises, challenges and future. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 19, 150–154. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2015.12.008>
- Battour, M., & Ismail, M. N. (2024). Muslim-friendly tourism: A conceptual framework for value-based destination development. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 50, 102121. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2024.102121>
- Benur, A. M., & Bramwell, B. (2015). Tourism product development and product diversification in destinations. *Tourism Management*, 50, 213–224. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2015.02.005>
- Fiqih, A. (2019). Strategi pengelolaan pariwisata halal Kota Surabaya. *Maliyah: Jurnal Hukum Bisnis Islam*, 9(2), 35–59. <https://doi.org/10.15642/maliyah.2019.9.2.35-59>
- Ishak, A. (2020). Pandangan stakeholder pariwisata tentang halal tourism dan branding Yogyakarta. *Jurnal Ranah Komunikasi*, 3(2), 69–81. <https://doi.org/10.25077/rk.3.2.69-81.2019>
- Laily, N. (2022). Metode penelitian deskriptif dalam ilmu sosial: Konsep dan aplikasi lapangan. *Pustaka Cendekia*. <https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/8y3j2>
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Mulianah, & Taqiuddin, H. U. (2023). Analisis strategi pemberdayaan ekonomi masyarakat berbasis pesantren di Lombok Tengah. *Econetica: Jurnal Sosial, Ekonomi dan Bisnis*, 5(2), 27–36. <https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/4c2nv>
- Rahman, M. K., Islam, N., & Tazim, M. A. (2023). The mediating role of destination image in Muslim tourist loyalty: Evidence from Southeast Asia. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 28(4), 334–350. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10941665.2023.2180197>
- Rezqy, V. O., & Fikriyah, K. (2022). Peran quadruple helix dalam pengembangan pariwisata halal di kawasan wisata Cisarua-Lembang. *Jurnal Ekonomika dan Bisnis Islam*, 4(3), 15–30. <https://doi.org/10.26740/jekobi.v4n3.p15-30>
- Sayekti, N. W. (2019). Strategi pengembangan pariwisata halal di Indonesia. *Kajian*, 24(3), 155–170.
- Sugiyono. (2018). *Metode penelitian kualitatif, kuantitatif, dan R&D*. Alfabeta.
- Suryani, S., & Bustamam, N. (2021). Potensi pengembangan pariwisata halal dan dampaknya terhadap pembangunan ekonomi daerah Provinsi Riau. *Jurnal Ekonomi KIAT*, 32(2), 45–59.

- Suryati, D., Amini, R., & Widyaningrum, M. (2023). Development of culinary MSMEs through digital marketing in Mataram City. *Econetica: Jurnal Sosial, Ekonomi dan Bisnis*, 5(1), 85–91. <https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/8w6hf>
- Suryani, I., & Bustamam, R. (2021). Halal tourism and economic growth: The role of Muslim-friendly destinations in Indonesia. *Journal of Islamic Economics and Finance Studies*, 3(2), 112–125. <https://doi.org/10.21009/jiefs.032.04>