

Evaluating The effectiveness of social media strategies in branding halal tourism: The case of Banyuwangi Indonesia

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Abstract

Halal Tourism has become a growing trend in the global tourism industry. In this digital era, social media plays an important role in promotion. Banyuwangi is one of Indonesia's regions with diverse natural potential, ranging from beaches and mountains to forests, and is also home to the religious culture of the Osing community. This local wisdom serves as a foundation for the organic development of halal tourism without diminishing the region's character and cultural identity. This article analyses YouTube and TikTok users' responses to Halal Tourism branding in Banyuwangi in 2024, examining views, likes, comments, and comment sentiment. Using a descriptive-analytical qualitative approach and the concept of Halal Tourism Branding, the research compares user interactions across both platforms. The findings indicate that TikTok is more frequently used and preferred, while YouTube offers deeper user engagement. TikTok users also tend to provide more positive responses than YouTube users. Therefore, Halal Tourism marketing in Banyuwangi should be tailored to each platform's characteristics to enhance effectiveness, supported by collaboration and consistent content to maintain audience interest and trust.

Keywords: Banyuwangi, Branding, Halal Tourism, Social Media.

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1. Introduction

In the era of globalization, intercultural interaction is increasing and influencing various sectors, including tourism. One example is the growth of Halal Tourism, driven by Muslim travelers' need for services that adhere to Islamic principles. This creates opportunities for destinations that offer halal food, accommodation, and other services. As the number of Muslim tourists continues to grow, the Halal Tourism market also expands, providing economic benefits for these destinations (Widodo et al., 2022). Meanwhile, the concept of Halal Tourism involves the provision of travel and tourism facilities in accordance with Islamic principles to meet the needs and desires of tourists (Mohsin & Ramli, 2015).

Other terms commonly used include Sharia Tourism, Friendly Tourism, Islamic Tourism, Religious Tourism, and Halal Hospitality (Organization of Islamic Cooperation, 2016). In addition to providing proper facilities for Muslims, Halal Tourism is also an essential part of the Islamic economy that aims to create welfare for the community, known as *maslahah* in the context of Islamic Law (*Maqasid Shari'ah*). *Maslahah* refers to goodness based on Islamic principles (Rokhaniyah & Almeira, 2023). *Maqasid*



Shari'ah, according to Imam Syaitibi, affirmed that the implementation of Sharia has the primary purpose of ensuring that the creator of Sharia, namely Allah SWT, especially meets basic needs (*dharuriy*), such as guarding religion (*Hifdzu Din*), guarding the spiritual soul (*Hifdzu nafs*), guarding offspring (*Hifdzu Nasl*), guarding property (*Hifdzu Maal*), and guarding reason (*Hifdzu Aql*) (Astutih, 2021).

Several countries worldwide are developing tourism industries to meet the needs of Muslim tourists and realize the vast market potential of the Halal Tourism segment. Muslim-majority countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and the United Arab Emirates are competing to attract international tourists by offering Halal Tour packages (COMCEC, 2016). On the other hand, Muslim minority countries have also adopted the concept of Halal Tourism, such as the United Kingdom, which provides prayer facilities to Muslim tourists through Serendipity Travel, Japan, which applies the principle of *Omotenashi* in its services, and Australia, which offers Muslim-friendly, namely Muslim Travel Guide, travel packages (Subarkah, 2018).

Promotion and branding are essential in introducing Halal Tourism destinations to potential tourists. Strong branding is critical to building a positive image. Destinations that build strong brands not only attract Muslim tourists but also expand their reach to broader segments (Wisker et al., 2020). With effective branding, a destination can differentiate itself from competitors and increase its appeal to travelers. In today's digital era, social media is an effective tool for promoting tourism destinations. Platforms like YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter allow destinations to share compelling stories, photos, and videos, reaching a broad global audience. Through intelligent and creative promotional campaigns, Halal Tourism destinations can strengthen their image and attract more visitors.

In Indonesia, the Halal Tourism industry is growing in response to demand from Muslim tourists. Recognized as one of the Best Halal Tourism Destinations. Indonesia offers a variety of tourist experiences that comply with the Halal principles (Nasution et al., 2020). With exciting destinations such as exotic beaches, rich historical and cultural sites, and Muslim-friendly accommodation and service facilities, Indonesia continues to attract Muslim tourists from all over the world. Indonesia's extraordinary achievements in the Halal Tourism industry are further strengthened by its first-place ranking as a World Halal Tourism Destination in the 2019 Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) Report (Mastercard & CrescentRating, 2019).

This award shows Indonesia's commitment to developing Muslim-friendly tourism infrastructure. Through innovation and continuous efforts, Indonesia has demonstrated excellence in the global halal tourism industry (Almeira et al., 2023). This achievement not only makes Indonesia proud but also strengthens the country's image as a superior and trusted destination for Muslim tourists. Indonesia ranked first as the world's best Halal Tourism destination in 2023 (Mastercard & CrescentRating, 2023). Indonesia's success as a leading Halal Tourism destination confirms the country's commitment to providing a tourist experience that meets the needs of Muslim tourists' preferences.

Banyuwangi, a district on the eastern tip of Java Island, is one of Indonesia's attractive Halal Tourism destinations. With its enchanting natural beauty, such as beaches, forests, and mountains, Banyuwangi offers a unique tourist experience for

Muslim tourists. One of the famous Halal Tourism destinations is Santen Island, a beach that applies Sharia principles. On Santen Island, facilities are adapted to Halal principles, including food, alcohol prohibition, provision of places of worship, and facility arrangements that maintain separation between men and women. The officers there wear headscarves and put Islamic principles first. Tourists are greeted with friendliness and courtesy upon visiting.

Banyuwangi Regent Abdullah Azwar Anas (2017) said that the trend of Halal Tourism continues to grow, so it must be responded to and developed by the Regional Tourism Office. The concept of Halal Tourism is not necessarily a destination for Muslims. Halal Tourism is a major concept in destination development, characterized by halal food guarantees, no alcohol sales, notification of time for worship (*adzan*), holy places complete with facilities for worship, and facilities that maintain separation between men and women.

At the meeting between KH Ma'ruf Amin and the Regent of Banyuwangi, Abdullah Azwar Anas, KH Ma'ruf Amin (2017) appreciated the efforts to develop Halal Tourism in Banyuwangi. He suggested that the local government cooperate with Umrah and Hajj travel service actors to promote Halal Tourism to prospective tourists from the Middle East. According to him, this collaboration can increase the attractiveness and exposure of Banyuwangi as a Halal Tourism destination. In 2021, the Banyuwangi district government facilitated free Halal certification for tens of thousands of UMKM (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) actors. Then, in 2024, the Banyuwangi Regency Government collaborates with the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Cooperatives and Small and Medium Enterprises (Kemenkop UKM). Banyuwangi again assists 1,000 MSMEs in obtaining free Halal certification (BeritaBwi, 2024).

In 2020, the Inbound Halal Fame Trip Rally group from the Muslim Association of Hajj and Umrah Organizers of the Republic of Indonesia (AMPHURI) visited Banyuwangi Regency to collect information and evaluate the feasibility of Banyuwangi as part of AMPHURI's Halal Tourism program. On this trip, AMPHURI also involved a crew from Indonesia Halal Discovery (IHD) Channel, a business unit of the *Amphuri Bangkit* Serving Cooperative, with a Canadian host, Iqra Yunus Palejwala. In addition, YouTuber Badarudin, who actively promotes Indonesian Halal Tourism through his YouTube channel, participated in the visit (AMPHURI, 2020).

In 2023, Universitas Islam Negeri Kiai Haji Achmad Shiddiq (UIN KHAS) Jember is collaborating with the Banyuwangi Regional Government to develop H2S (Halal, Hygienic, and Healthy) tourism. This collaboration was inaugurated on October 25, 2023, at the Banyuwangi Tourism Office. This H2S tourism development initiative is part of efforts to advance cultural and historical heritage-based tourism. Some of the reasons underlying this development include the existence of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between UIN KHAS Jember and the Banyuwangi Regional Government, which includes education, research, and community service. In addition, UIN KHAS Jember has a Halal Inspection Institute (LPH) and Halal Center, as well as various faculties and study programs that support H2S tourism, cultural heritage, and

religion in Banyuwangi. Banyuwangi also has human and natural resources that support tourism development (Wasila, 2023).

In developing Halal Tourism in Banyuwangi, branding and social media promotion are becoming increasingly important to strengthen the destination's image as a Halal Tourism destination. With innovative promotional campaigns on social media platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter, Banyuwangi can reach more Muslim tourists worldwide and increase tourism's contribution to the local economy. Therefore, research on branding Halal Tourism in Banyuwangi through social media is very relevant and helpful in developing the Halal Tourism industry in Indonesia. This research will focus on how Banyuwangi utilizes YouTube and TikTok platforms to strengthen its image as an attractive Halal Tourism destination. Through analysis of promotional campaigns and interactions with social media users, this research aims to understand effective strategies for reaching audiences and how messages about Halal Tourism in Banyuwangi are conveyed and received by local and global communities.

Halal tourism, also known as Islamic tourism, refers to travel and hospitality services that adhere to Islamic principles, including Halal food, prayer facilities, and activities aligned with Muslim values. Several factors drive this sector's growth. First, global Muslim tourist spending is expected to reach 230 million by 2026 (Kementerian Pariwisata dan Ekonomi Kreatif Republik Indonesia, 2021). This increase spurs the development of more halal-friendly services and destinations. Second, destinations around the world increasingly offer a diverse range of Halal travel products, including Halal-certified resorts, hotels, restaurants, and attractions (Battour & Ismail, 2016). Third, several countries, especially in Southeast Asia and the Middle East, launched initiatives to position themselves as leading Halal tourism destinations, as Malaysia and Indonesia did through national certification programs and marketing campaigns (Samori & Salleh, 2016).

Social media has become an essential tool for branding and promoting Halal destinations, enabling them to reach a global audience, interact with tourists, and build a strong brand presence. Influencer marketing plays a significant role in promoting Halal travel. Muslim travel influencers share experiences and recommendations on platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook, helping to build trust and authenticity towards Halal travel destinations (Feizollah et al., 2021). In addition, user-generated content (UGC) on social media platforms, such as traveler-shared photos, reviews, and experiences, is a valuable source of information for potential travelers seeking authentic insights into Halal-friendly destinations (Juliansyah et al., 2021). Social media also enables highly targeted advertising based on demographics, interests, and behaviors, allowing Halal travel marketers to effectively reach segments of the Muslim travel market (Mukherjee et al., 2022). Finally, social media facilitates direct engagement between destinations and travelers through interactive posts, live sessions, and responsive communication, thereby building a loyal community and fostering a sense of connectedness with the audience (Hakim, 2021).

2. Literature Review

In recent years, the growth of the global halal industry has influenced tourism development, leading to the emergence of Halal Tourism as an important field of study. This trend is driven by the increasing number of Muslim travelers and their need for halal-friendly services and destinations. As a result, many countries, including Indonesia, have promoted Halal Tourism to improve their competitiveness. This development has encouraged researchers to study Halal Tourism from various perspectives, such as economic potential, policy, destination management, and marketing.

Researchers worldwide have explored various concepts and themes to demonstrate their interest in Halal Tourism. By using VOSviewer software, researchers processed data in the form of previous research using the keywords "Tourism", "Halal", and "Indonesia" from Scopus with the following visual results:

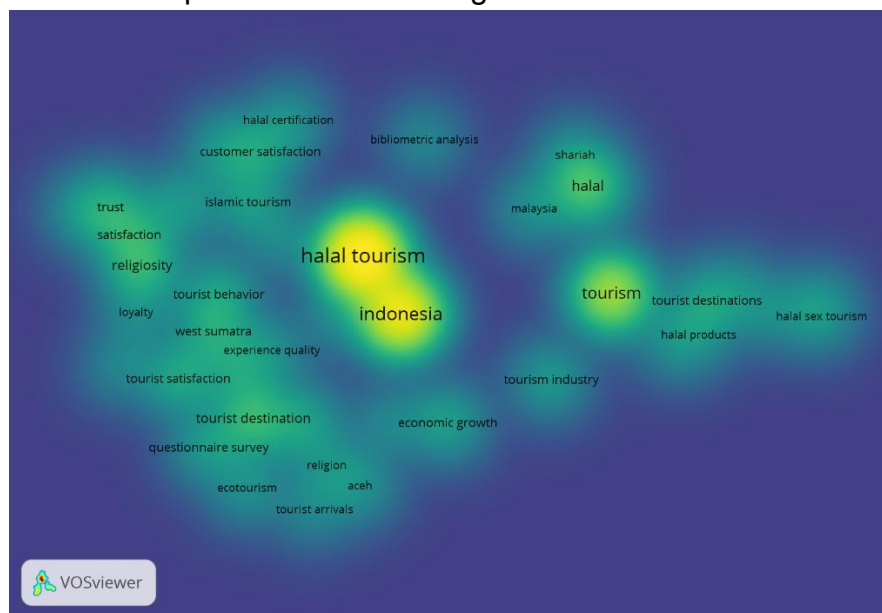


Figure 1. Density Visualization

Data analysis using VOSviewer is conducted to identify research trends and ensure the originality of this research. This method helps visualize keyword networks and identify dominant themes and research gaps. As shown in Figure 1, "Halal Tourism" is a widely studied keyword, often linked with terms such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and Tourism. This indicates that research on Halal Tourism has been well developed, especially in countries with large Muslim populations. However, most studies focus on destination development, policy, and tourist preferences, rather than branding or communication strategies.

There is still a gap in the literature regarding Halal Tourism branding, particularly in Banyuwangi. This shows that limited attention has been given to how Halal Tourism is promoted and communicated at the regional level through digital media. In fact, branding is important in shaping destination image and competitiveness. Therefore, this research focuses on analyzing Halal Tourism branding in Banyuwangi through social media. Banyuwangi is selected due to its growing reputation as a tourism

destination in Indonesia. This research specifically examines YouTube and TikTok as key platforms in shaping public perception through video content.

This research aims to analyze how social media content influences the image of Banyuwangi as a Halal Tourism destination. The findings are expected to contribute to tourism branding studies and provide practical insight for optimizing digital promotion strategies in Halal Tourism development.

3. Research Method

This research uses a qualitative descriptive-analytical approach. It focuses on the branding of Halal Tourism in Banyuwangi through YouTube and TikTok in 2024. The research aims to examine how Halal Tourism is portrayed on social media and how it shapes public perception. This research relies on secondary data from YouTube and TikTok content related to Banyuwangi Halal Tourism. The concept of Halal Tourism branding is used as the main analytical framework. Data are analyzed using a qualitative approach to understand the narratives formed on social media. The technique used is content analysis to identify key themes and keywords related to Halal Tourism in Banyuwangi. Content analysis, as defined by Harold D. Lasswell, is a method used to systematically analyze messages in media content (DQLAB, 2021).

In addition, this research aims to identify key factors that influence the effectiveness of Halal Tourism branding on social media. These include user interactions such as views, likes, and comments on YouTube and TikTok content about Banyuwangi Halal Tourism. The analysis is divided into three parts: a comparison of responses between YouTube and TikTok, user sentiment analysis, and patterns of comments related to Banyuwangi Halal Tourism. The findings are expected to provide insights into digital communication in Halal Tourism and offer practical recommendations to improve future branding strategies.

4. Results and Discussion

The Role of Social Media in Improving Halal Tourism Branding

In this growing digital era, the role of social media in strengthening the branding of the Halal Tourism industry is becoming increasingly important. Social media is not only a platform for sharing information but also an effective means to promote Halal Tourism destinations to a global audience. Van Dijk (2013) revealed that social media is a platform that centers on user presence, enabling them to interact and collaborate. This leads to the view that social media is an online tool that strengthens connections between users and forms social bonds.

Most countries in the world today use the Internet as an indispensable part of daily life. The Internet has become the primary way people access information, communicate with others, work, study, shop, and even socialize. This makes the Internet an essential tool in everyday life for modern society (Nasrullah, 2015). Indonesia has a population of about 185.3 million, making it one of the countries with the largest number of Internet users in the world (Kemp, 2024). This widespread use of the Internet has spurred the development of a range of digital services, from e-commerce and online education to digital health services. The large number of internet

users in Indonesia also provides excellent opportunities for online businesses and technology startups to proliferate. In addition, social media has become a viral platform in Indonesia, used by the public to communicate, share information, and form online communities (McKinsey Indonesia, 2016). This condition shows how the Internet has become an integral part of the daily lives of Indonesian people.

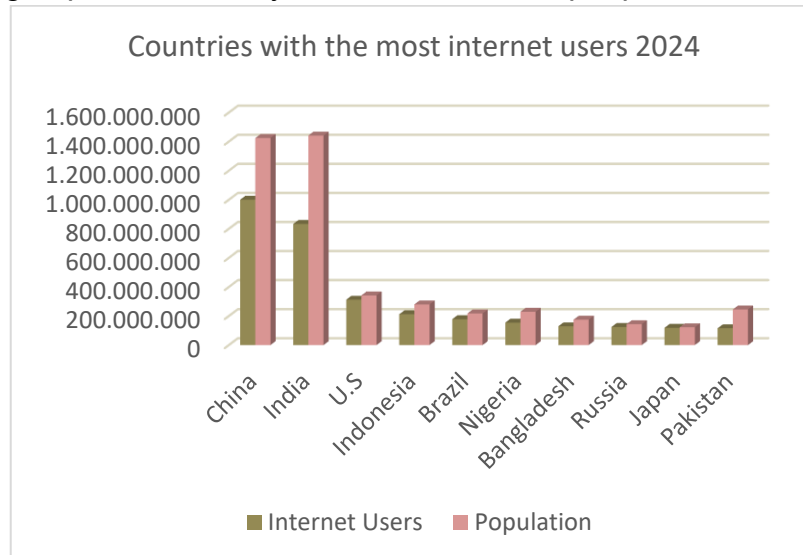


Figure 2. Countries with the most internet users in 2024

Figure 2 shows a bar chart of the top 10 countries with the highest number of internet users in 2024. China ranks first with over 1 billion users, followed by India and the United States. Indonesia is also among the top countries, with more than 200 million users, indicating high internet penetration. This data shows that internet use is growing rapidly, especially in developing countries. As more people are connected, there are greater opportunities for digital communication, access to information, and the growth of the digital economy.

In this context, social media plays a vital role in enhancing Halal Tourism's branding. With the ever-increasing number of internet users, social media platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter are becoming highly effective tools for reaching a wider audience (Jamil et al., 2021). Social media enables Halal Tourism destinations to visually and interactively promote their uniqueness and excellence to attract the attention of potential Muslim tourists from around the world (Joseph, 2024). Branding through social media can be done through various means, such as sharing video and image content showing Halal facilities, tourist experiences that comply with Sharia principles, and testimonials from satisfied Muslim tourists (Dawam et al., 2023). Creative, consistent social media campaigns can build a positive image and increase awareness of Halal Tourism destinations. For example, travel destinations can use YouTube to upload travel vlogs and documentaries featuring Halal Tourism attractions, while TikTok can be used for short, engaging, and easy-to-share content (Mardoni & Amsal, 2023).

In addition, direct interaction with users through comments and messages on social media enables destination managers to understand the needs and preferences of Muslim travelers and to provide quick responses to their questions or concerns (Velly,

2020). Thus, social media serves not only as a promotional platform but also as a tool to build closer relationships with audiences, increase loyalty, and encourage word-of-mouth recommendations among the Global Muslim community. Overall, by harnessing the vast potential of social media, Halal Tourism destinations like Banyuwangi can strengthen their branding, attract more Muslim tourists, and contribute to local and global economic growth.

User Response to Banyuwangi Halal Tourism Branding

Banyuwangi Regency remains a popular destination for both domestic and international tourists. In 2024, tourist visits increased by 7 percent from the previous year, reaching a total of 3.4 million (BeritaBwi, 2025). However, amid the growing trend of global Halal Tourism, Banyuwangi now offers a concept of Halal Tourism that combines natural beauty with comfort for Muslim tourists (Saifudin et al., 2021). Banyuwangi Halal Tourism branding not only aims to attract more Muslim visitors but also to create an inclusive and friendly tourist environment for all circles (Mustafa, 2017). Various facilities and services have been prepared, ranging from Halal restaurants and places of worship that are easily accessible to hotels that comply with Halal standards (Muksin et al., 2021).

User response to this effort has been mixed, with some enthusiastically welcoming it, seeing it as an essential step forward in accommodating the needs of Muslim travelers. On the other hand, some consider that this branding needs to be socialized more widely so that it can be understood and accepted by all circles (Fawaid, 2019). In this section, researchers will explore how social media users respond to branding Halal Tourism in Banyuwangi. Through data analysis, researchers will see the extent to which this branding has succeeded in attracting user interest and trust, as well as how they perceive the Halal Tourism experience offered by Banyuwangi.

Comparison of YouTube and TikTok User Responses Regarding Halal Tourism in Banyuwangi

This section aims to explore and compare YouTube and TikTok users' responses to Halal Tourism branding in Banyuwangi. This analysis will be based on the number of viewers, likes, and comments. YouTube, with its long-form videos and more in-depth content, is often used by users to find comprehensive information and detailed reviews (Andhika, 2019). Meanwhile, TikTok, with its creative and viral short videos, offers a memorable glimpse of travel destinations, which often influences travel decisions quickly (Setiawati & Pritalia, 2023). Through this comparison, we will examine how the distinct characteristics and demographics of users on these two platforms shape their perceptions of Halal Tourism in Banyuwangi.

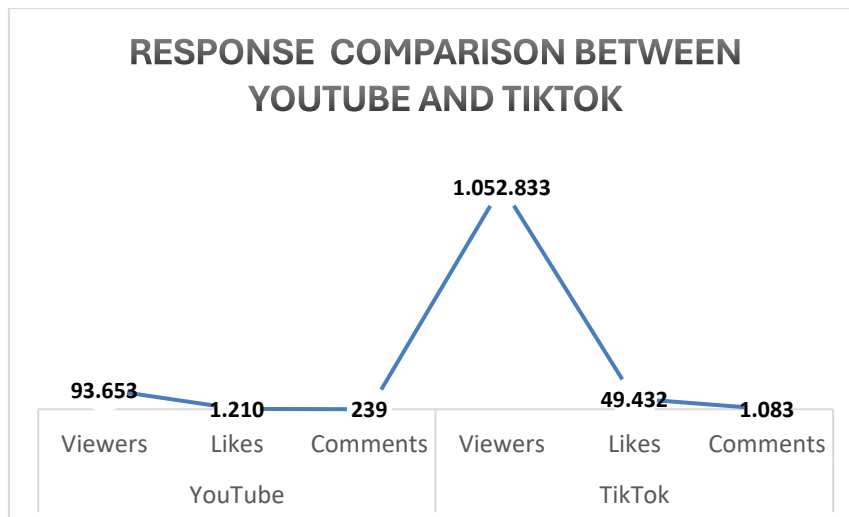


Figure 3. Comparison of Responses between YouTube and TikTok Users in Banyuwangi Halal Tourism

Figure 3 is the result of an analysis in the form of a comparison of responses between YouTube and TikTok users in promoting Halal Tourism in Banyuwangi. Data is calculated based on the number of viewers, likes, and comments on videos related to Banyuwangi Halal Tourism on both platforms. From the graph above, the comparison of responses from YouTube and TikTok users to Banyuwangi Halal Tourism shows a striking difference in engagement. From the graph above, it can be seen that TikTok has a higher response than YouTube in promoting Halal Tourism in Banyuwangi. This is evident in the higher number of viewers, likes, and comments on TikTok videos. The average TikTok views for Banyuwangi Halal Tourism videos reached 1.052.833, while YouTube viewership reached only 93.653. Then, the average TikTok likes were 49.432, while YouTube likes were only 1.210. Moreover, the average TikTok comment is 1.083, while YouTube comments are only 239. This data shows that TikTok is more effective in reaching and involving social media users in promoting Halal Tourism in Banyuwangi than YouTube.

YouTube and TikTok Comments Sentiment Regarding Halal Tourism in Banyuwangi

This section aims to analyze the sentiment of positive and negative comments that appear on YouTube and TikTok related to Halal Tourism in Banyuwangi. By evaluating comments across a range of related content, researchers can gain a clearer picture of public perceptions and the factors that influence them (Ardiansyah et al., 2022). Positive comments usually reflect aspects appreciated by users, such as the natural beauty of Banyuwangi, access to Halal facilities, and pleasant tourist experiences. On the other hand, negative comments may reflect user challenges or shortcomings, such as a lack of information about Halal Tourism, limited facilities, or perceptions of service quality (Wahyu et al., 2022).

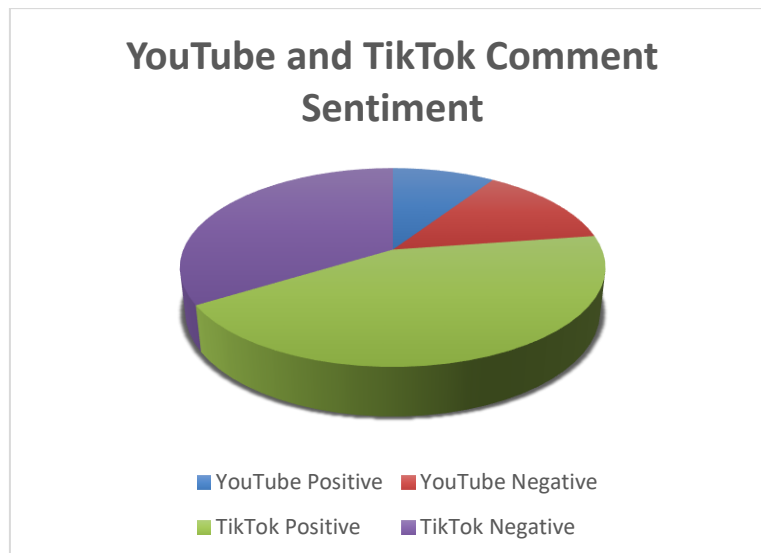


Figure 4. Sentiment of Banyuwangi Halal Tourism comments on YouTube and TikTok

Figure 4 is a sentiment comment on Banyuwangi Halal Tourism on YouTube and TikTok. The data was calculated based on sentiment analysis of positive and negative comments on videos related to Banyuwangi Halal Tourism on both platforms. The analysis showed different patterns in the numbers of positive and negative comments. On YouTube, there were 61 positive comments and 88 negative comments. This shows that despite the support, criticism of Halal Tourism in Banyuwangi is more prevalent on this platform. On the other hand, TikTok showed a much higher volume of comments: 286 positive and 222 negative. Although negative comments are also quite significant, the number of positive comments on TikTok is much larger than on YouTube.

The average number of positive comments on YouTube supports the existence of Halal Tourism in Banyuwangi as a brilliant tourism breakthrough. On TikTok, more positive comments show admiration for Halal Tourism destinations, including Santen Island. Conversely, negative comments on YouTube often criticize the branding of Halal Tourism as a form of Arabization. The same thing is also found on TikTok, where negative comments also mention Halal Tourism branding as a form of Arabization.

This analysis indicates that while both platforms receive both positive and negative comments, TikTok tends to have more overall engagement and more positive comments than YouTube. This suggests that TikTok users may be more enthusiastic or more involved in discussions about Halal Tourism in Banyuwangi than YouTube users, although criticism remains on the platform.

YouTube and TikTok Comments Response Patterns Regarding Halal Tourism in Banyuwangi

This section aims to identify and analyze comment-response patterns on YouTube and TikTok regarding the superstructure and infrastructure of Halal Tourism in Banyuwangi. By analyzing comments across these two platforms, researchers can understand users' perspectives on aspects that shape their Halal Tourism experience. On YouTube, in a longer, more in-depth video format, users may offer more detailed suggestions on service quality, Muslim-friendly policies, and the effectiveness of

Banyuwangi Halal Tourism's promotional efforts (Dwi Sahputri et al., 2023). On the other hand, on TikTok, which is known for short, viral videos, comments may focus more on direct experiences and quick impressions of physical facilities, such as cleanliness, the comfort of Halal accommodation, and the accessibility of Halal dining places (Senglaub, 2024). This analysis will reveal how these comments reflect user satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the superstructure and infrastructure of Banyuwangi Halal Tourism.

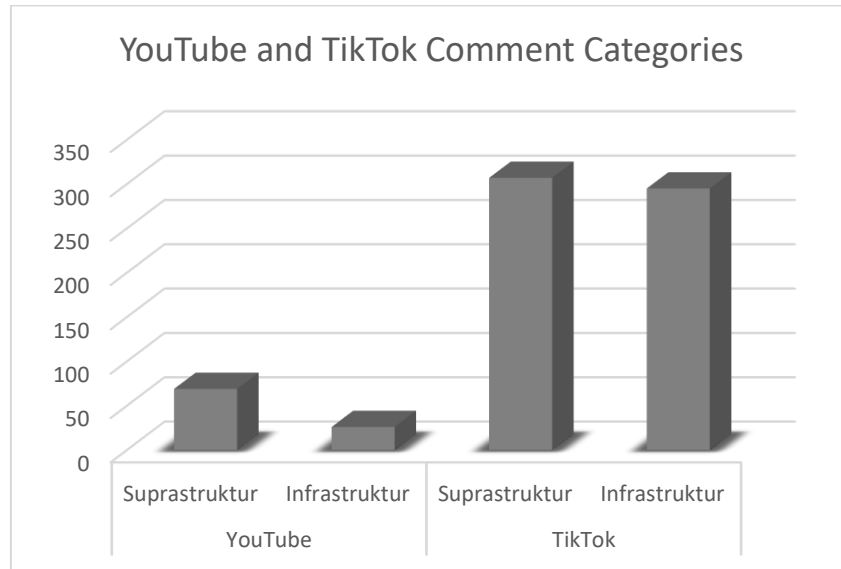


Figure 5. YouTube and TikTok Comments Response Patterns Regarding Halal Tourism in Banyuwangi

Figure 5 presents the results of an analysis of the response patterns of YouTube and TikTok social media users regarding the superstructure and infrastructure of Halal Tourism in Banyuwangi. The patterns of comment responses on YouTube and TikTok regarding the superstructure and infrastructure of Halal Tourism in Banyuwangi differ significantly. On YouTube, 69 comments focus on the superstructure, and 26 on infrastructure. Meanwhile, on TikTok, the number of comments regarding the superstructure is much higher, reaching 307, and comments related to infrastructure total 295.

This data shows that TikTok users respond more to these two aspects than YouTube users. On YouTube, comments focus more on the superstructure, but there are still far fewer than on TikTok. In contrast, on TikTok, user attention is almost evenly distributed between the superstructure and the infrastructure, with a high number of comments for both. This shows that TikTok users may be more active in providing feedback and have more attention to various aspects of Halal Tourism in Banyuwangi than YouTube users.

5. Conclusion

This research examines the effectiveness of Halal Tourism branding in Banyuwangi through social media. The results show that TikTok has a wider reach and higher engagement, while YouTube offers deeper, more meaningful interactions per viewer. TikTok also generates more varied responses, including both positive and negative

comments, especially related to facilities and infrastructure. These findings suggest that marketing strategies should be adjusted to each platform. TikTok is well-suited for reaching a wider audience quickly, while YouTube is more effective for delivering detailed, informative content to build trust. This research is limited to data from 2024, so it may not reflect trends in other years. Overall, the results highlight the importance of adaptive, platform-based digital marketing strategies. Governments and stakeholders should optimize each platform and maintain consistent content to improve destination attractiveness and strengthen tourist trust.

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