



IMPROVING THE COMPETITIVENESS OF HALAL PRODUCTS THROUGH DIGITAL MARKETING AND STRATEGY FOR HALAL CULINARY TOURISM BOSS

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Abstract: This research is based on the development of the Indonesian halal industry, which has driven Halal Product Assurance (JPH) regulations and increased consumer awareness. Halal Boss Surabaya faces intense competition through differentiation of Middle Eastern culinary products such as nasi kebuli and roti Maryam, the aesthetics of its restaurant ambiance, and the use of digital platforms like Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and WhatsApp. This study analyzes Halal Boss Surabaya's halal digital product marketing strategy to increase competitiveness from an Islamic business ethics perspective.

This descriptive qualitative study collected data through semi-structured interviews with the owner and digital marketing team of Halal Boss, participant observation at the business location, documentation of social media content, and library research. Data were analyzed using content analysis with source triangulation to ensure validity and reliability. The findings revealed that digital marketing strategies, including aesthetic visuals, authentic halal storytelling, collaboration with influencers and Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs), and responsive real-time interactions, aligned with Islamic business ethics principles such as honesty, transparency, MUI certification, fairness, inclusive pricing, trustworthy service, sincerity, and ihsan, social responsibility through job creation. This strategy successfully increased brand awareness, customer loyalty, and competitiveness through increased visits and turnover in the 2021-2024 period, although performance experienced a significant decline from 2024 to 2025, with a 10-30% drop in turnover due to the less than optimal utilization of the location text voucher feature on the TikTok platform compared to competitors and intensified competition from new halal MSMEs. Theoretically, this research enriches the study of Islamic marketing through an integrative digital-Islamic ethics model. Its practical implications provide recommendations for halal MSMEs, including local SEO optimization, AI personalization, and continuous evaluation to stop businesses based on the maqasid of sharia.

Keywords: digital marketing, halal products, competitiveness, Islamic business ethics, Halal Boss Surabaya, social media

INTRODUCTION

Halal culinary tourism in Surabaya is growing rapidly as a prime destination for consumers seeking authentic Middle Eastern cuisine experiences, such as nasi kebuli, gule Maryam, roti Maryam, and Arabic satay, with an aesthetic restaurant atmosphere complete with live adhan and distinctive music. Halal Boss Surabaya¹. Established in March 2020 amid the pandemic through a home-based pre-order system, the restaurant has expanded into an official restaurant in Maspion Square in 2021, offering delivery via GrabFood and GoFood

while creating local jobs. A digital marketing strategy through Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and WhatsApp has been key to promoting this unique offering, with Instagram dominating product discovery (61%), followed by Facebook (60%) and TikTok (46%)².

The demand for halal products has increased significantly as Muslim and non-Muslim consumers become more aware of safety standards, thayyib quality, and Islamic business ethics, supported by regulations such as Law No. 33/2014 on Halal Food and Beverages (JPH) and Government Regulation No. 39/2021. However, the intense competition in the F&B sector in Surabaya, with indicators of product diversity, taste, halal certification, and strategic locations, demands digital innovation to maintain Halal Boss's competitiveness. Adaptive digital marketing, such as educational-entertainment content on TikTok for the younger generation and aesthetic visuals on Instagram, in line with the principles of honesty, transparency, and Islamic social responsibility, ensures business blessings in the era of globalization³.

This study aims to explain the digital marketing strategy for halal culinary tourism to increase the competitiveness of Halal Boss Surabaya from the perspective of Islamic business ethics. The theoretical contribution enriches the study of sharia marketing with an integrative digital-ethics model for halal culinary; and practically, it provides recommendations for Halal Boss, such as optimizing TikTok vouchers and WhatsApp auto-chat, as well as similar business actors for sustainable adaptation.

Based on these principles of Islamic business ethics, Halal Bo\$\$ not only prioritizes product quality and customer satisfaction, but is also committed to implementing social

¹ Andre Ridho Saputro, Fitri Nuraini, and Mohammad Alfian, 'Strategi Pemasaran Kuliner Halal: Studi Kasus UMKM Kota Surabaya', *Journal of Manufacturing in Industrial Engineering & Technology*, 1.2 (2022), pp. 28–37, doi:10.30651/mine-tech.v1i2.16922.

² Dewi Primadona Siregar and Juliana Putri, 'Strategi Pemasaran Dan Pengembangan Bisnis Halal Di Era Digital', *AL-IQTISHAD : Jurnal Perbankan Syariah Dan Ekonomi Islam*, 2.2 (2024), pp. 29–44, doi:10.47498/iqtishad.v2i2.3755.

³ Sofia Masulah, Muhammad Kambali, and Misella Sandi, 'Digitization of Halal Product Marketing through Sharia Platform for Village MSMEs in Kota Baru Driyorejo Gresik', 1.1 (2025), pp. 20–34.

responsibility in line with the values of sustainability and community welfare. However, in the digital era and the increasingly dynamic market competition for halal products, an in-depth study is needed to determine how these principles can be effectively integrated into digital marketing strategies to maintain a competitive position while optimally meeting consumer expectations.

Metode Penelitian

This study used descriptive qualitative methods at Halal Boss Surabaya to study the digital marketing strategy of halal culinary tourism. Primary data were obtained from direct observation of digital activities and interviews with managers regarding digital marketing strategies, monthly content plans, and online-offline marketing strategy relationships. Multiple data sources were combined to ensure accuracy, focusing on TikTok voucher strategies and WhatsApp automated chats. Primary data came from semi-structured interviews, digital content observations, and Halal Boss Surabaya social media posts.

Data collection tools consisted of an interview guide with open-ended questions about digital strategies, a content observation checklist for engagement levels, KOL collaboration, and audio/video recordings. Interview minutes per session were collected, content analyzed using Instagram Insights, and a review of MUI halal certification documents.

Data analysis included filtering data by coding digital strategy themes such as SEO, visual content, and WhatsApp chats, displaying data (competitive performance tables), and examining them through pattern matching with halal marketing theory (Natsir et al., 2025). Digital strategies were measured using reach indicators and voucher sales .

Hasil Penelitian

The research results of the digital marketing strategy implemented by Halal Bos Surabaya are structured to build a brand image as a halal-certified Middle Eastern restaurant with a visually appealing atmosphere. In addition, this strategy aims to strengthen the competitiveness of halal products within the framework of Islamic business ethics. Based on information obtained from interviews with the owner and the Halal Bos digital marketing team, this strategy integrates an integrated approach that combines key digital platforms with various supporting tactics to achieve increased brand awareness and customer conversion. The following is the main grouping of Halal Bos digital marketing strategies based on interviews:

1. Through Social Media

Halal Boss utilizes major social media platforms as digital promotion channels, namely Instagram: @halalboss.id, Facebook: halalboss.id, TikTok @halalboss_surabaya, and WhatsApp 0817-7811-87 for stories, broadcasts, and special Ramadan reservations.

2. Collaboration with Influencers and Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs)

Collaboration with influencers and key opinion leaders (KOLs) is a key supporting strategy. KOLs are defined as individuals who possess strong accreditation and specialized competencies in a specific area. as halal culinary experts, while influencers tend to prioritize broad reach through relevant and lifestyle content. Halal food vloggers from Surabaya's halal niche are featured on the official Halal Boss account. KOLs include Heru Handoko (@cobakulinersurabaya) and influencer Andre (@budalrek), who uses TikTok to discover Halal Boss Surabaya, discussing authentic Arabian cuisine at Maspion Square. Additionally, local KOLs appear in Halal Boss's Instagram posts, focusing on educating about halal-certified Middle Eastern food. Collaborative content is produced organically and then boosted through Meta Ads, which have proven effective in Building audience confidence through authentic narratives without aggressive promotion.

The digital marketing strategy implemented by Halal Boss Surabaya is a planned effort to increase awareness, engagement, and competitiveness of halal products by utilizing various mapping, taking into account demographic segmentation, such as age and consumer preferences, so that the messages conveyed through digital content can be tailored appropriately. The goal of this approach is to align the Halal Boss brand vision with consumers' expectations and understanding of the company's social media platforms and integrated marketing activities. The initial step in this strategy is to conduct market values.

In implementing its digital marketing, Halal Boss adopts a brand guide approach, which serves as a reference for developing conceptualized marketing content. Content is built around several content pillars designed and scheduled monthly, encompassing various formats such as video reels, carousels, and regular feed posts. This content creation products and the Halal Boss brand, as audiences, particularly millennials and Gen Z, tend to respond better to content that offers approach focuses more on storytelling that provides narrative context for halal experiences and stories rather than direct hard-sell techniques.

Digital marketing optimization relies heavily on key platforms, namely Instagram and Facebook, which are considered marketing channels with the highest purchasing potential for Halal Boss's market segment. Paid advertising through Meta Ads on Facebook and Instagram Ads remains a key strategy for reaching new audiences and increasing content visibility. To expand reach and attract traffic with greater viral potential, Halal Boss also utilizes TikTok as an additional platform to increase brand awareness, redirecting audiences from TikTok to Instagram to reach a more relevant target market.

In addition to a purely digital approach, Halal Boss also incorporates offline marketing activities through various events, such as youth studies and other community activities, to strengthen real-world interactions with customers and project an authentic and ethical halal image in accordance with the company's Islamic business principles. This is a crucial strategy for brands to build customer trust and loyalty not only online but also in person.

Discussion

Analysis of the Implementation of Digital Marketing Strategies to Increase the Competitiveness of Halal Boss Surabaya from an Islamic Business Ethics Perspective.

Halal Boss Surabaya's digital marketing strategy to enhance the competitiveness of its halal business demonstrates a comprehensive integration of social media platforms, aesthetic visual content, influencer collaboration, and data-driven performance analysis. This approach aligns with the concept of digital marketing strategy according to Kotler & Keller (2022), who define digital marketing as the process of creating, communicating, and delivering value through interactive channels such as Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp to build lasting customer relationships.

Halal Boss's Content Strategy and Digital Platforms implemented a monthly content blueprint with eight reels, four carousels, and two feed posts focused on storytelling about the halal nature of Middle Eastern products such as nasi kebuli and roti maryam, resulting in an increase of 722,493 impressions, with 75.5% coming from non-followers. This strategy aligns with the theoretical foundation of Kotler & Keller (2022), which states that effective content marketing increases brand awareness through authentic narratives that trigger organic engagement and impulse sales conversions on visual platforms like Instagram.

The use of Meta Ads and TikTok for viral traffic, combined with responsive WhatsApp (5-minute response time), supports this increase, although it could decline by 10-30% by 2025 due to MSME competition. This multichannel approach aligns with the digital marketing mix concept of Mushoffa & Fadli (2023), which integrates SEO, social media, and email marketing to optimize customer reach and retention in a competitive market.

From an Islamic business ethics perspective, Halal Boss's digital strategy reflects the principle of honesty through transparency of MUI certification and the composition of organic content. Astuti (2022) explains that honesty in product information builds consumer trust and business blessings, according to QS. Al- Anfal: 27, the principle of justice is manifested in inclusive pricing and equitable service via WhatsApp without discrimination, in line with Tazkia (2021), who emphasizes the fair distribution of economic benefits (QS. An-Nisa: 135). Amanah is implemented through consistent content schedules and collaboration with credible KOLs such as @cobakulinersurabaya, creating local jobs as a social responsibility (QS. An-Nisa: 58). Ihsan is reflected in digitally integrated youth study events and restaurant aesthetics that exceed expectations, in line with the concept of doing good in excess (QS. Al-Baqarah: 177), as described by Tazkia (2021). Tawhid (monotheism) as the foundation of worship makes

promotion a means of devotion (QS. Al-An'am: 162), while online-offline synergy strengthens sustainable competitiveness based on the maqasid sharia.

The integration of digital strategy and Islamic ethics has resulted in a unique positioning as a Middle Eastern halal family restaurant with a Google rating of 4.6, overcoming competition through authentic nuance differentiation and adapting to the platform's algorithm. This aligns with Yeni (2023), who defines competitiveness as the ability to generate added value through innovation and market adaptation, with indicators such as increased visits, loyalty, and turnover.

Conclusion

Based on the research results and discussions outlined previously, the following conclusions can be drawn:

Halal Boss Surabaya implements an integrated digital marketing strategy across various social media platforms, including Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, and TikTok, and collaborates with influencers and Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) who are close to the target segment. This strategy is realized through the creation of aesthetic, consistent, and informative visual content about the uniqueness of Middle Eastern halal culinary products, strengthening storytelling around brand identity, and utilizing interactive features such as stories, comments, and direct messages to build rapport with consumers. Through this approach, Halal Boss successfully increased brand awareness, customer loyalty, and competitiveness through increased visits and revenue in 2021 and 2024. However, this strategy experienced a significant decline in performance from 2024 to 2025, particularly in revenue, which decreased by 10-30%. This was due to the suboptimal utilization of the location text voucher feature on the TikTok platform compared to competitors, as well as the intensification of competition from new halal business players, namely MSMEs, who are increasingly aggressive in the digital market, driving consumer engagement and creating strong differentiation from competitors, thus directly contributing to strengthening business competitiveness amidst the intense competition in the halal culinary industry in Surabaya.

From an Islamic business ethics perspective, digital marketing at Halal Boss Surabaya has fulfilled several principles of Islamic business ethics, including justice, honesty, trustworthiness, ihsan (righteousness), tauhid (monotheism), and responsibility. The principle of fairness is evident in its implementation through proportional and inclusive pricing for various consumer segments, from students to families, and equitable service responses via WhatsApp, regardless of social status, to ensure a fair and equitable distribution of economic benefits among stakeholders. The honesty aspect is evident in comprehensive transparency in the delivery of halal-compliant ingredient composition information and the production process, as well as MUI certification through Instagram and TikTok content, free from hyperbolic

deception, reinforced by a blueprint of authentic content to sustainably build consumer trust. The principle of trustworthiness is evident in the commitment to maintaining Sharia standards through a consistent monthly posting schedule verified in collaboration with credible Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) in the halal niche, and operational guarantees that include local employment as a manifestation of corporate social responsibility. The principle of ihsan is evident in the provision of excessive service through educational content that emphasizes the values of halal Middle Eastern cuisine, along with youth study events integrated into digital platforms, creating a value-added experience that goes beyond minimal obligations and is oriented toward the welfare of the community. The principle of tawhid (monotheism) is evident in the orientation of worship in every promotional activity through the integration of religious nuances such as live adhan (call to prayer) and spiritual storytelling, which make business a means of devotion to Allah SWT. The aspect of social responsibility is evident in the tangible contribution through job creation and the promotion of halal culture that supports the welfare of the Surabaya community, in line with the maqasid sharia in maintaining the public welfare.

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