The Impacts on Digitalizing Indonesia's Visa Services

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Abstract. The Directorate General of Immigration in Indonesia has made significant improvements to the Immigration Application system through hardware and software upgrades. Regulations have also been eased to increase immigration involvement in supporting Indonesia's economic growth. For foreigners, immigration services such as visa and stay permits have been upgraded such as the Stay Permit can be accessed through the App without physically present in the Immigration Office. The Immigration Officers in checkpoints have also been replaced with auto gate machines with the latest software to ensure a smooth and efficient experience for travellers. The purpose of this study is to determine how the new visa system and visa scheme are impacting Indonesia's economy. The method used for this study is normative-empirical. The results of this study explained that the digitalization and ease of process in Indonesia's immigration services have had a significant positive impact on foreigner's satisfaction. This satisfaction leads to trust, which increases Indonesia's popularity among other neighboring countries. The ease of the visa process is also impacting the increase in tourist arrivals. Additionally, because tourists can easily apply for visa extensions from the new Immigration Application System, they no longer need to be physically present in the Immigration Office. This makes it easier for tourists to extend their visas to stay in Indonesia and actively participate in Indonesia's economy.

Keywords: Digitalization, Indonesia e-Visa, Ease of process, Indonesia Public Welfare

1   Introduction

The traditional visa application process, notorious for its stacks of paperwork and in-person appointments, is undergoing a digital revolution. Governments around the world are embracing e-visas and online application systems, transforming how people apply to enter their countries.

Indonesia's current Director-General of Immigration appointed by President Joko Widodo in January 2023 Silmy Karim has been given special tasks by the President: digitalizing immigration services, and golden visa (Binekasri,2023). Digitalization is expected to make it easier for foreigners to apply for immigration services, with the ease of applying for immigration services, we shall expect the increasing arrivals of foreigners in Indonesia, attracting businesses, investors and impacting Indonesian economy positively[1].

Beside digitalization, visa policy is also being changed and improved, new types of visas have been introduced, such as visas for art concert performances, visas for sports, visas for studying in Indonesia, and many others. These various types of visas aim to make it easier for foreigners to choose a visa according to the purpose of their arrival. The visa requirements have also been simplified and streamlined for ease of application.

The Golden Visa is a special type of visa introduced by the Directorate General of Immigration in Indonesia. It aims to attract high-caliber gold investors by offering an extended stay of up to 10 years. This visa accomodates various purposes, including investment, family reunification, repatriation, and second home purposes.

As for the challenges for the Directorate General of Immigration, the success of visa policies is related to other factors such as tax convenience, which is a policy of the Directorate General of Taxes; ease of opening new bank accounts, which is a banking policy ; and ease of employing foreign workers, which is a policy of the Ministry of Manpower.

Digitalization is also implemented at Immigration Checkpoints, starting with Jakarta's Soekarno Hatta Airport and Bali's Ngurah Rai Airport, auto gates with the latest technology in Soekarno Hatta and in Ngurah Rai, digitalization of checks at Immigration Checkpoints through autogate is of course also included in the digitalization package launched by the Directorate Immigration General to improve immigration services[2]

Following is a breakdown of how the visa application process can be digitized:

1. Online Application Forms:
   Paper forms are replaced with online applications accessible through a government or authorized agency website. Applicants fill out details electronically and upload required documents, such as passports and proof of funds, directly to the system. The system may include features to validate documents and collect fees securely.

2. Streamlined Document Management:
   Documents like scanned passports and bank statements are uploaded electronically instead of physical submission. Optical Character Recognition (OCR) technology can extract data from documents, reducing manual processing, and secure cloud storage can be used to manage and access documents efficiently.

3. Online Payment Processing:
   Applicants can pay visa application fees securely through integrated payment gateways like credit cards or online wallets. This eliminates the need for cash payments or money orders.

4. Real-time Tracking and Communication:
   Applicants can track the progress of their application online, receive updates on its status (approved, rejected, pending), and communicate with authorities through secure messaging systems.

5. Integration with Border Control Systems:
   Approved visas can be linked electronically to passport databases accessible by border control authorities. This reduces the need for physical visa stamps and expedites the entry process.

6. Additional Considerations:
   a. Biometric Verification: Some systems may integrate facial recognition or fingerprint scanning for additional security.
   b. Mobile Applications: Visa applications might be accessible through mobile apps, offering greater convenience.
   c. Pre-registration Systems: Travelers might register electronically before their trip, providing basic information to streamline border procedures.

7. Benefits of Digital Visa Systems:
   It faster processing times for applicants, Reduced administrative costs for governments. Increased transparency and communication, and Improved efficiency and convenience for all parties.

8. Challenges of Digitalization:

It includes cybersecurity concerns require robust data protection measures. Digital divide can disadvantage those with limited internet access. While technical glitches can cause delays and frustration.

Overall, digitalizing the visa process holds immense potential to transform international travel, making it faster, more convenient, and more secure for everyone.

Digitalization in Immigration actually already as a foundation, mentioned in National Act No. 6 year 2011 concerning Immigration, article 1 no. 10 Immigration Management Information System is system technology information and communication which is used to collect, process and present information to support operations, management and decision making in carrying out immigration functions. Also in article 7 mentioned that The Director General is responsible for compiling and managing the Immigration Management Information System as a system to practicing Immigration Functions within inside or outside the territory of Indonesia. so, we can see that digitalization is actually already as base foundation of Immigration organization[3].

Digitalization in Immigration has started around the year of 2000, start from Indonesian Passport issuance, and then stay permit process for foreigner. Indonesia visa services just start the online process submission on 2013, started from the application by guarantor to the Directorate General of Immigration, meanwhile, for foreigners to apply should go to Indonesia embassy to get the visa stamped in the Passport. Covid-19 struck in 2019, and then Indonesia visa application being hold and no visa is issued during the situation. After Covid-19 began to be able to be controlled, Indonesia start to begin opening the borders with a new policy and a new system, introducing Indonesia e-Visa plattform phase I, this e-Visa platform phase I is available only for guarantor to apply visa for foreigner. Indeed with this e-Visa, the foreigner no longer needed to present in Embassy abroad to get the visa stamped.

Currently, in 2024, The Directorate General of Immigration began to implement new e-Visa platform (Tivana, 2023), new "Molina" visa application page at https://evisa.imigrasi.go.id will start to be used as the core application for services to foreign nationals at the Directorate General of Immigration, "Molina" begins with facilitating applications for eVisa, eVisa extensions, eVOA, and eVOA extensions.

As The Directorate General of Immigration has its 4 (four) main functions (Leticia, 2022), such as:

1. Immigration services: This services such as Indonesian passport for Indonesian nationalities, visa and stay permit for foreigners
2. Law Enforcement: Immigration enforcement on the Immigration Law to the foreigners entering exiting Indonesia, also for Indonesia nationals that violating Immigration law
3. National Security: Immigration responsibility in the borders to make sure people entering Indonesia is not included in the blacklist or watchlist.
4. Facilitating Public's economy growth.: Immigration policy such as visa and stay permit policy, or enforcement policy has the correlation to public's economic growth. Immigration can use the visa policy to attract business people or investment to come to Indonesia, as well as enforcement policy if it is too strict then the businessmen or investors may be frightened to come to Indonesia.

The digitalization of visa process is an improvement of the first main functions of immigration services, and also the fourth function of facilitating public's economy growth, this journal will try to seek the impacts on the policy of the Directorate General of Immigration digitalizing immigration services, how does it impacts to applicants, and how does it impacts to the government[4].

2 Method

The method to be used is by normative-empirical legal research. In normative legal research will use secondary data, by examining theoretical matters related to legal principles, legal conceptions, views and legal doctrines, regulations and legal systems using secondary data (Muhdlor, 2012). As well as principles, rules, norms, and legal rules in laws and regulations and other documents related to the research being carried out. From a normative point of view, this research can be obtained from Minister of Law And Human Rights Regulation No. 22 year of 2023 regarding visa and stay permit, while the empirical legal approach by looking directly at the field related to the use or implementation of regulations related to the research topic such as by conducting interviews with relevant stakeholders[5].

3 Discussion

3.1 Applying Indonesia visa before digitalization.

Before the new visa application was implemented, there are 2 (two) ways (Ministry of Law and Human Rights Regulation, 2018) to apply Indonesia visa:
a. Visa application by foreigner to the Indonesia Embassy abroad, then there are some type of visas that needed approval will be forby Directorate General of Immigration or
b. Visa application by guarantor to the Directorate General of Immigration in Indonesia, to get visa approval, then visa approval

To apply for a visa at the Indonesian Representative Office (Embassies or Consulate Generals), applicants must come in person for an interview process. They should bring hard copies of visa application documents, including the application form, application letter, passport, and return ticket. Generally, the process takes 4 (four) working days for applications that do not require Directorate General of Immigration's approval. However, if Directorate General of Immigration's approval needed, it may take another 2 (two weeks) of processing[1].

Another way to apply visa is applying at the Directorate General of Immigration. Guarantors for foreigners can apply directly to the Directorate General of Immigration. However, this poses a challenge for guarantors located outside Jakarta, as they must come in person, take a queue number, and submit their application documents at the counter. The required hard copy documents for the visa application include the application form, application letter, passport, and return ticket. Generally, the process takes 4 (four) working days after the documents are submitted. Afterward, the Directorate General of Immigration will issue *visa approval*, which serves as the basis for foreigner to apply visa at Indonesia Representative Office abroad[6].

In 2018, Visa Application by guarantor to the Directorate General of Immigration started to use online system   https://visa-online.imigrasi.go.id/ which started the new visa system introduced that guarantor that applying visa approval for foreigner, not needed to be present anymore and can be done online. But, this only for the visa approval and then after that, foreigner should be present in Embassy to apply the visa.

3.2   How Immigration applies digitalization on the visa services

Suddenly there are no visa being issued during the Covid-19 pandemic, The Covid-19 pandemic has had an impact on changes in activity patterns in society. Previously, various activities could be carried out freely, now apart from having to comply with health protocols, there are also mobility restrictions. Of course, this is one of the drivers of digitalization in almost all sectors (Pandemi pendorong digitalisasi, 2024). When the world is re-started, Indonesia is preparing to reopen its borders, but with a cautious approach. To facilitate this process, the government has introduced a new eVisa policy. Under this policy, the visa application process has been streamlined only to a single channel: applicants shall submit their visa requests directly to the Directorate General of Immigration through a sponsor. Unlike the previous system, where visa approvals were issued, this time, the visas themselves are directly granted upon successful application[7].

One significant benefit of this eVisa system is that foreigners no longer need to visit Indonesian embassies or consulates to apply for visas. Instead, they can complete the entire process online, reducing unnecessary interactions and paperwork. This move aligns with global trends toward digitalization and aims to enhance efficiency while maintaining security protocols. By implementing the eVisa policy, Indonesia hopes to strike a balance between welcoming travelers and safeguarding its borders. As travel restrictions evolve, this streamlined process will play a crucial role in managing international mobility effectively[3].

Immigration has expedited and adjusted its visa application system through the platform (https://visa-online.imigrasi.go.id), which was previously intended for issuing visa approvals. It has now been adapted to issue eVisas. Consequently, immigration has changed its visa issuance policy, eliminating the need for foreigners to apply or obtain visas at the Indonesian Embassy or Consulate General. Foreigner are now issued electronic visas directly by the Directorate General of Immigration

The new appointed Director General of Immigration on January 2023, Silmy Karim decided to give new breakthroughs such as digitalizing the visa services and also implement new system to facilitate visa application. Silmy also upgrade the autogates in the Airports to more advanced technology. *"Molina"* is expected to not only boost the tourism sector but will also draw investment into the country, according to Silmy. "Immigration makes it easy for global business people and investors to explore and review potential investments before investing in Indonesia," Silmy said (Foreigners Can Apply for Visitor Visa, Extension on Molina Website .., 2023). *"Molina"* is a new platform, new foundation of Immigration application (https://evisa.imigrasi.go.id/), this platform was newly built because previously the platform or applications in immigration were still separate. For instance, there was a specific application for visa approval processing, another for visa processing, and yet another for residence permit processing. With this new platform, all these functions are combined into a single application that utilizes the same database[8].

The visa application page at https://visa-online.imigrasi.go.id/ closes on January 9, 2024, and new "Molina" visa application page at https://evisa.imigrasi.go.id will start to be used as the core application for services to foreign nationals at the Directorate General of Immigration, "Molina" begins with facilitating applications for eVisa, eVisa extensions, eVOA, and eVOA extensions.

The process of applying for an eVisa and its extension is as follows: An eVisa can be applied for by either a Guarantor or Foreigner. There are several types of visas that *must be applied for by a Guarantor*, however, for tourist visas can be independently applied by Foreigner. The necessary equipment to apply for an eVisa includes a computer device and

internet network, then access the address https://evisa.imigrasi.go.id. The eVisa application process has an appearance that is easy to understand by users, applicants will be guided throughly to apply for the type of visa needed. Then filling in several fields on an electronic form and upload required documents. The next step is payment which differs from before, "Molina" has 2 (two) payment options: payments through SIMPONI which is a Ministry of Finance payment system that can now be accessed via internet banking or other payment platforms such as Tokopedia, Shopee, and another payment options is through Mastercard, Visa or JCB credit/debit card. After completing these steps, applicants wait whether the eVisa is approved or rejected as per usual visa processes. Once approved, the eVisa can be downloaded in applications and used to enter Indonesia[9].

One advanced convenience provided by "Molina" is for Foreigners holding a Limited Stay Visa. Previously, they had to visit the Immigration Office to obtain a residence permit. The process to report for obtaining a Stay Permit in Immigration Office, first must register online, then proceed to Immigration office with a queing number, then wait to be called for photos and fingerprints, then the Stay Permit (ITAS) will be issued after 4 (four) working days.

Now, this process is eliminated, there's no need to go to the Immigration Office anymore. "Molina" automatically issues a limited stay permit when the Foreigner enters Indonesia through the Immigration Checkpoint Authorities.

The submission of eVOA application and its extension can be done independently by foreigners. The necessary equipment to apply for an eVOA includes a computer device and internet network, then access the address https://evisa.imigrasi.go.id. The eVOA application process has an appearance that is easy to understand by users, applicants will be guided throughly to apply for the type of visa needed. Then filling in several fields on an electronic form and upload required documents. The next step is payment which differs from before, "Molina" has 2 (two) payment options: payments through SIMPONI which is a Ministry of Finance payment system that can now be accessed via internet banking or other payment platforms such as Tokopedia, Shopee, and another payment options is through Mastercard, Visa or JCB credit/debit card. After completing these steps, applicants wait whether the eVisa is approved or rejected as per usual visa processes. Once approved, the eVOA can be downloaded in applications and used to enter Indonesia[10]

Foreigners seeking to extend their eVisa or eVOA (electronic Visa on Arrival) can now do so conveniently through the online platform called "Molina." only with several clicks making it faster and more efficient This streamlined process eliminates the need for in-person visits to the Immigration Office,

Here are the types of eVisa and eVOA that can be extended conveniently by accessing "Molina" (Foreigners Can Apply for Visitor Visa, Extension on Molina Website .., 2023):
  a. Tourism Stay Permit (indeks C1A1)
  b. Medical Treatment Stay Permit (indeks C3A2)
  c. Government Business Stay Permit (indeks C4A3)
  d. Short Course Stay Permit (indeks C9A3)
  e. Exhibitor Stay Permit (indeks C11A4)

3.3   Impacts of digitalizing Indonesia visa services

The digital platform "Molina" which accommodates eVisa, eVOA and extension applications, also issues limited stay permits directly without the need to be present at the Immigration Office, of course has a significant impact, also added with the implementation of autogate at Immigration Checkpoints, what impact will result from this digitalization policy.

The first implication is the significant elimination in meetings between applicants and officers. In developing countries like Indonesia, this is very important to suppress corrupt practices, illegal levies, the usual process of "in person process" or meetings automatically causes long queues, the general practice implemented is to speed up or cut the queue by "fast track" with additional fees. With this new system there are no face-to-face meetings, and the application tracking feature is also added, so that applicants can clearly know when the application was submitted, when it was checked by an officer, when it was approved, and when the visa was issued, this is very transparent and will eliminate corrupt practices[4].

Challenges lies ahead visa service digitalization:

a. Data Security: Robust cybersecurity measures are crucial to protect sensitive personal information submitted online.
b. Digital Divide: Unequal access to technology and the internet can disadvantage some applicants.
c. Technical Issues: Glitches or outages in online systems can cause delays and frustration.

The road ahead as digital visa programs continue to develop, governments will need to focus on:

a. Inclusivity: Developing alternative application methods for those with limited internet access.
b. User-friendliness: Creating intuitive and easy-to-navigate online platforms.
c. Data Protection: Implementing robust cybersecurity measures to ensure applicant data privacy.

The digitalization of Indonesia visa services with the new evisa platform brings changes, impacting applicants, and goverments, here's a breakdown of the key impacts:

1. **Positive impacts :**
    a. For Applicants
        1) More Efficient : applicants get convenience such as no need to make photocopies, no longer need to queue physically to submit an application
        2) Faster processing times : Digital applications are generally processed faster than traditional paper forms, leading to faster visa approvals. Applicants also get application tracking, so they can find out at what stage their application is currently, so that applicants also get certainty in their service.
        3) More convenient : Applicants can apply from anywhere with an internet connection, eliminating the need for physical visits to embassies or consulates or the Directorate General of Immigration. This really increases convenience compared to applicants that has to queue for hours to be served directly.
        4) Better transparency : Online systems provide real-time tracking of application status, allowing applicants to stay informed throughout the process, they can see the status when application is being reviewed by the visa officer, when the application granted, rejected with a proper information.
        5) Less costs : Elimination of physical document handling and courier fees can potentially lead to reduced application costs, also when applicants needed to be present in person, it has to be a transportation cost, parking, hassles of traffic, it is significantly reduced prior to digitalized visa process. Easier application process also urge applicant to apply themselves without

the help of visa agents, which means they don't have to pay more money for extra charges such as visa agent fee.

    b.   For Government
       1) Enhanced Efficiency: Digital systems streamline processing workflows, reducing manual tasks and administrative burdens
       2) Reduced Costs: Digitalization can minimize operational expenses associated with paper forms and physical document storage.
       3) Avoiding Corruption and Illegal Levies: by not meeting officers and applicants, reducing the risk of illegal levies and corruption which often occur in the bureaucracy
       4) Better Data Management: Electronic records enable efficient data organization and analysis, facilitating informed decision-making.
       5) Improved Security: Biometric verification and secure data storage can potentially enhance border security.

2. Negative impacts:

    a.   Digital Divide: Unequal access to technology and the internet can disadvantage individuals in remote areas or with limited resources.
    b.   Technical Issues: Glitches or outages in online systems can cause delays and frustration for applicants.
    c.   Cybersecurity Concerns: Robust data protection measures are crucial to prevent breaches and safeguard sensitive information.
    d.   Potential for Bias: Automated algorithms used in visa processing could introduce bias if not carefully designed and monitored.

In overall digitalization of visa services benefits efficiency which digital applications streamline the process, saving time and resources for both applicants and authorities, transparency which applicants can track the progress of their application and receive updates electronically, accessibility which online applications can be submitted from anywhere with an internet connection, making the process more convenient for travelers, reduced cost which digital systems can lower administrative costs for governments and for applicants[11].

The digitalization of visa processes offers a win-win situation for travelers and governments alike. By addressing the challenges and ensuring inclusivity, this trend has the potential to revolutionize international travel, making it smoother and more efficient for everyone. The digitalization of visa processes offers a significant step forward for smoother and more efficient international travel. However, addressing the challenges of digital inequality, data security, and potential bias is crucial to ensure a fair and inclusive system that benefits all stakeholders[6].

4   Conclusion

The rise of digitalization is transforming visa processes. Gone are the days of lengthy paper forms and in-person visits. Indonesia eVisa, eVOA applications currently offer efficiency,

transparency, and faster processing times. Applicants can submit documents, track progress, and receive updates electronically. This not only benefits travelers but also streamlines administration for governments. However, ensuring secure data handling and equitable access for all remains crucial for successful digital visa implementation.

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