

Government Policy Strategies in the Tourism Sector to Increase the Number of International Tourists Visiting Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

The tourism sector is a strategic pillar of Indonesia's economy, yet its recovery post-pandemic faces a policy dilemma following the revocation of the Visa-Free Visit (BVK) policy for 159 countries in mid-2023. This research examines government policy strategies in the tourism sector to increase the number of international tourists visiting Indonesia, with a particular focus on the dynamics of the Visa-Free Visit Policy (Bebas Visa Kunjungan/BVK). The research employed a qualitative approach through interviews, document analysis, and literature review involving stakeholders from the tourism and immigration sectors. The findings indicate that the BVK policy contributes positively to increasing international tourist arrivals by improving travel accessibility and reducing administrative barriers. However, the policy's revocation was influenced by concerns related to immigration supervision, misuse of residence permits, and national security considerations. The research also reveals differing perspectives between tourism and immigration institutions, which have led to policy disharmony. Furthermore, the results show that visa policy alone is insufficient to increase tourist arrivals and must be supported by destination quality, transportation connectivity, security, and effective tourism promotion. Therefore, this study recommends the implementation of a hybrid visa policy that combines selective visa-free access with digital monitoring systems and strengthened cross-sector collaboration. Such an approach is expected to enhance Indonesia's tourism competitiveness while maintaining effective immigration control and national security.

INTRODUCTION

The tourism sector is one of the main pillars of the Indonesian economy which contributes greatly to the country's foreign exchange, job creation, and regional economic growth through multiple effects on the transportation, accommodation, culinary, and creative industries sectors (UNWTO, 2023). The Visa-Free Visit Policy (BVK) which has been implemented since 2016 for 169 countries is one of the government's proactive instruments in encouraging international accessibility by eliminating administrative obstacles in short-term visa processing (Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, 2019). The results were evident in the 2017–2019 period when BVK was fully operational: foreign tourist visits increased consistently from 14.04 million to 16.10 million, accompanied by foreign exchange growth from US\$13.14 billion to US\$16.91 billion (BPS, 2020). This data confirms that BVK not only boosts the volume of visits, but also increases tourist spending which has a direct impact on

the country's foreign exchange revenues (Li et al., 2025; Matthew et al., 2021; Momanyi et al., 2023; Rasool et al., 2021; Sadekin, 2025; Sadullayeva, 2025; Seraj et al., 2025).

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown how vulnerable the tourism sector is to changes in international mobility policies (Cairns & Clemente, 2023; Chinprateep, 2025; Qin & Chen, 2022; Sun et al., 2022; Yu et al., 2023). Foreign tourist visits plummeted drastically to 4.05 million in 2020 and only 1.56 million in 2021, with foreign exchange also falling to US\$3.38 billion and US\$0.52 billion. Entering the post-pandemic recovery phase, foreign tourist visits increased again to 5.89 million in 2022, 11.68 million in 2023, and reached 13.90 million in 2024 growing 19.05 percent annually and becoming the highest post-pandemic achievement with foreign exchange recorded at US\$16.70 billion (BPS, 2025; Ministry of Tourism, 2025). For 2025, foreign tourist visits are projected to reach 15.39 million with foreign exchange of US\$18.28 billion or grow 13.17 percent (Ministry of Tourism, 2025). However, the 2024 figure is still below the pre-pandemic peak of 16.10 million in 2019, indicating that there is still room for recovery that has not been fully filled.

In the midst of this recovery trend, the government decided to revoke BVK facilities for 159 countries in mid-2023 on the grounds of tightening immigration supervision and improving the quality of incoming tourists (Ministry of Law and Human Rights of the Republic of Indonesia, 2023). This step raises a real policy dilemma between security interests and economic interests. On the one hand, the government needs to prevent the abuse of visa-free facilities such as overstays and work permit violations. But on the other hand, empirical studies in various ASEAN countries show that the ease of visa access is positively correlated with an increase in tourist visits and tourism foreign exchange (Pham et al., 2021). Countries such as Thailand and Malaysia that maintain visa-free policies for their key partners actually gain a greater competitive advantage (UNWTO, 2023). This condition is in line with the World Economic Forum's Travel and Tourism Development Index (TTDI) framework which emphasizes that destinations with more open and adaptive travel policies tend to be more competitive in attracting international tourists and recover faster after the global crisis, so that the revocation of the BVK has the potential to put Indonesia in a less competitive position in the region.

Despite the significance of this policy shift, there remains a notable gap in the existing literature (Bohnenberger, 2023; Bulfone, 2023; Ernst et al., 2022). Previous studies have predominantly focused on quantitative analyses of tourist arrival statistics and foreign exchange earnings, while qualitative research exploring the perceptions, responses, and underlying reasoning of key stakeholders regarding the BVK revocation is still very limited (Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, 2024). Furthermore, most prior research has examined visa policy either from a purely economic perspective or a purely security perspective, without adequately addressing the inherent tension and trade-offs between these two dimensions. Thomas et al. (2025) remind that there is a large gap between the advancement of academic knowledge and policy decision-making practices, so research needs to be directed to produce truly "applied" (policy-relevant) inputs. In addition, Widaningrum et al. (2025) found that top-down policies that are too oriented to national goals risk weakening sensitivity to local needs and creating a mismatch between policy objectives and the reality on the ground. Therefore, BVK policy evaluation needs to place a multi-stakeholder perspective as key to

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assessing the compatibility of visa policies with the recovery needs and competitiveness of destinations.

The novelty of this research lies in its multi-stakeholder qualitative approach that integrates perspectives from tourism policymakers, immigration officials, and tourism industry actors to uncover the complex dynamics and institutional tensions behind BVK policy formulation and revocation. Unlike previous quantitative studies, this research provides an in-depth understanding of the policy trade-offs between economic competitiveness and national security, while offering practical recommendations for a hybrid visa policy model that balances these competing interests. This study also contributes to filling the literature gap regarding trade-off analysis of BVK policies based on a multi-actor perspective that has not been available so far (Kemenparekraf, 2024), as well as strengthening the study of tourism policy as an adaptive system that must balance economic and national security goals (Hall, 2021).

Based on this background, the researcher took the title "Government Policy Strategy in the Tourism Sector to Increase the Number of Foreign Tourists to Indonesia." The main problem in this study is the imbalance between the goal of increasing foreign tourist visits and policies that have the potential to hinder the flow of visits due to the revocation of BVK. On the one hand, the government seeks to strengthen the tourism sector as a source of foreign exchange and a driver of national economic growth, but on the other hand, the increasingly stringent visa policy actually reduces the interest of potential tourist visits, especially from countries that previously enjoyed visa-free facilities (BPS, 2024). Based on these problems, this study formulated four research questions. First, what is the impact of the BVK policy on the increase in the number of foreign tourists to Indonesia based on the perspective of stakeholders before the policy is revoked? Second, what are the factors that the government considers in revoking the BVK policy and what are the implications for Indonesia's tourism competitiveness? Third, what is the perception and response of stakeholders in the tourism sector to the BVK policy and the opportunity for its re-implementation? Fourth, what policy strategies can be recommended to increase the number of foreign tourists through a more adaptive and competitive visa policy approach?

This study aims to analyze the government's policy strategy in the tourism sector to increase the number of foreign tourists to Indonesia, focusing on the dynamics of BVK policies. In particular, this study aims to: first, analyze the perception of the impact of BVK policies on the increase in the number of foreign tourists before the policy is revoked; second, identify the factors considered by the government in revoking BVK and analyze its implications for Indonesia's tourism competitiveness; third, analyzing the perception and response of stakeholders to the BVK policy and the opportunity for its re-implementation; and fourth, formulate recommendations for more adaptive and competitive visa policy strategies to increase the number of foreign tourists. Through a multi-stakeholder qualitative approach, this study will explore the in-depth views of government officials, tourism industry players, and travel associations to produce a comprehensive understanding of the evidence-based direction of national tourism policy (Creswell, 2023).

In practical terms, the results of this study are expected to be strategic recommendations for the government and tourism stakeholders in designing visa policies that are adaptive and competitive but still balanced with the needs of immigration supervision, including evaluating the impact of the revocation of BVK on the regional tourism ecosystem, the preparation of

more selective visa policy options with risk mitigation, and strengthening cross-actor and cross-agency coordination. Academically, this study enriches the literature on the relationship between visa policy and international tourist mobility in developing countries through a multi-stakeholder qualitative approach that is able to uncover social, economic, and institutional dimensions that cannot be explained numerically (Creswell, 2018). This research also contributes to strengthening the study of tourism policy as an adaptive system that must balance economic and national security goals (Hall, 2021), as well as filling the literature gap regarding the trade-off analysis of BVK policies based on a multi-actor perspective that has not been available so far (Kemenparekraf, 2024). Thus, the results of this study are expected to produce policy recommendations that are truly "applicable" and evidence-based in strengthening Indonesia's tourism competitiveness at the global level.

METHOD

Research Paradigm

This research used an interpretive paradigm with a qualitative approach. This paradigm was chosen because policy research not only aims to explain the content of policy normatively, but also to understand the meaning, reasoning, and perspective of stakeholders on the Visit Visa-Free (BVK) policy and its impact on the tourism sector. According to Creswell (2018), the interpretive paradigm allows researchers to understand the reality of policy not solely as a rule document, but as a process that is understood, carried out, and felt by policy actors and tourism industry players, so that the resulting recommendations are more relevant and contextual.

Research Design

This study uses a descriptive qualitative case study design to understand in depth the dynamics of BVK policy as an immigration policy instrument. This design was chosen because it allows researchers to examine the process of formulation, implementation, and evaluation of BVK policies in a real context, while exploring the meanings, perceptions, and interpretations of stakeholders that cannot be explained quantitatively (Creswell, 2018). This approach also opens up space for a broader understanding of the relationship between the economic interests of tourism, immigration policy, and the competitiveness of Indonesia's destinations compared to other countries in the Southeast Asian region.

Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis in this study is the Visa-Free Visit (BVK) policy as an immigration policy instrument that affects the accessibility of foreign tourists to Indonesia. The analysis is focused on the content of the policy, the background of policy changes, the implementation process, and its impact on the Indonesian tourism sector.

Research Setting

This research was carried out in Jakarta because the city acts as a national decision-making center and is the main location for government agencies that have direct authority over tourism and immigration policy, such as the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Immigration and Corrections. Primary data collection was carried out through online interviews with informants from the tourism and policy ecosystem, considering that BVK policies are formulated, implemented, and evaluated at the national level.

Data Types and Sources

The data used consisted of primary data and secondary data that complemented each other. Primary data was obtained through in-depth interviews with purposively selected key informants, including: officials of the Ministry of Tourism (Nia Niscahya, SH., MBA, Deputy for Marketing for the 2019–2022 period and Main Functional Adyatama Parekraf); former Minister of Tourism for the period 2014–2019 (Dr. Arief Yahya, M.Sc.); officials of the Directorate General of Immigration of the Ministry of Immigration and Corrections; as well as tourism industry players from PHRI, ASITA, and tour and travel business owners in Jakarta. Secondary data is obtained from official government documents such as Presidential Regulation Number 21 of 2016, BPS statistical reports, reports from international institutions (UNWTO, TTDI, OECD, World Bank), scientific publications, and FGD exposure materials between related ministries/institutions. These two types of data are used in a complementary manner: primary data provides an empirical perspective of actors and policymakers, while secondary data provides a conceptual foundation and validation of field findings.

Data Collection Methods and Techniques

1. Interview

In-depth interviews are conducted with semi-structured guidelines so that researchers can explore informants' views, experiences, and interpretations flexibly. This technique allows researchers to adjust the direction of the questions based on the context and answers of the informants, so as to gain a rich understanding of the process of formulation, implementation, and evaluation of BVK policies from various stakeholder perspectives.

2. Document Review

Document analysis was carried out on various relevant written sources, such as Presidential Regulation Number 21 of 2016 concerning Visa-Free Visits, official statistics reports of BPS, as well as policy evaluation reports from the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Immigration and Corrections. The analysis of this document aims to strengthen the data from the interview with factual and historical information about BVK's policies.

Data Analysis Methods

Data analysis was carried out qualitatively using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (1994) which consisted of three iterative stages. First, data reduction, which is simplification and concentration on the most relevant information through repeated reading of interview transcripts, document sorting, and initial code. Second, the presentation of data in the form of thematic narrative texts and comparison matrices to see the relationship between information and compare findings between sources. Third, drawing conclusions and verifying by reviewing the adequacy of evidence on each theme and checking the consistency between the interview data and the document. To improve the accuracy of data management and traceability of the analysis process (audit trail), this study uses NVivo software as a tool to organize, code, and trace patterns between data, while interpretation and interpretation are still fully carried out by the researcher based on the research focus and theoretical framework (Saldaña, 2021).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Perception of the Impact of the Visa-Free Visit (BVK) Policy on the Increase in Foreign Tourists Before the Revocation of the Policy



Figure 1. Perception of BVK Impact on Foreign Tourist Increase Before Revocation

Source: Primary data was processed by researchers using NVivo, 2026.

Based on the results of data analysis using NVivo, the perception of informants shows that BVK is seen as having a positive impact on the increase in the number of foreign tourists to Indonesia before the policy is revoked. The ease of entry through BVK is closely related to the elasticity of tourist demand, foreign tourists tend to choose destinations that offer simple, fast, and minimal administrative barriers. These findings are in line with previous research that states that visa liberalization can increase the mobility of international tourists and strengthen the attractiveness of a destination (UNWTO, 2016; Neumayer, 2010).

Informants from the tourism sector emphasized that visa ease is a determining factor in travel decisions, especially for the European, Australian, and East Asian markets that have a high sensitivity to travel efficiency. This was expressly conveyed by one of the informants from tourism industry players:

"European tourists are very sensitive to the ease of entry. They had researched the destination in advance, and once they knew they had to take care of the visa first, the option immediately shifted to Thailand or Malaysia. BVK is not just a formality, it is a signal that Indonesia is welcome. Once it is revoked, the message the market receives is different." (I-4 Informant, Tourism Industry Player, 2026 Interview)

The statement strengthens the argument that BVK functions not only as an instrument of immigration administration, but as a signal of the destination's competitiveness that is directly accepted by the international tourist market. In this context, the visa policy operates as part of the *global tourism accessibility* strategy to strengthen Indonesia's position in international tourism competition.

The results of the analysis also show that the impact of BVK is not only reflected in the volume of visits, but also in the economic contribution it generates. Foreign tourists have a much higher economic value than domestic tourists due to different *spending behavior* characteristics, foreign tourists tend to buy fully *integrated tour packages* that include accommodation, transportation, guides, and tourist activities, resulting in greater per capita

expenses. These findings are in line with the concept of *Average Revenue Per Arrival* (ARPA) put forward by informants from the travel industry:

"If we talk about visa income, maybe USD 30 per head. But one foreign tourist spent an average of USD 1,200 while in Indonesia. So, if we make it difficult to enter for USD 30, we lose USD 1,200. It was an economically unreasonable decision." **(I-2 Informant, Former Minister of Tourism, 2026 Interview)**

This perspective reinforces the argument of Dwyer et al. (2004) that international tourist spending has a direct contribution to the economic growth of destinations. However, the informant from the immigration side reminded that the increase in foreign tourist visits is also influenced by other factors such as flight connectivity, destination promotion, and the quality of the tourist experience, so the BVK must be understood as one of the factors in the broader tourism ecosystem, not as a single instrument.

Government Considerations in Revoking the Visa-Free Visit (BVK) Policy and Its Implications for Indonesia's Tourism Competitiveness

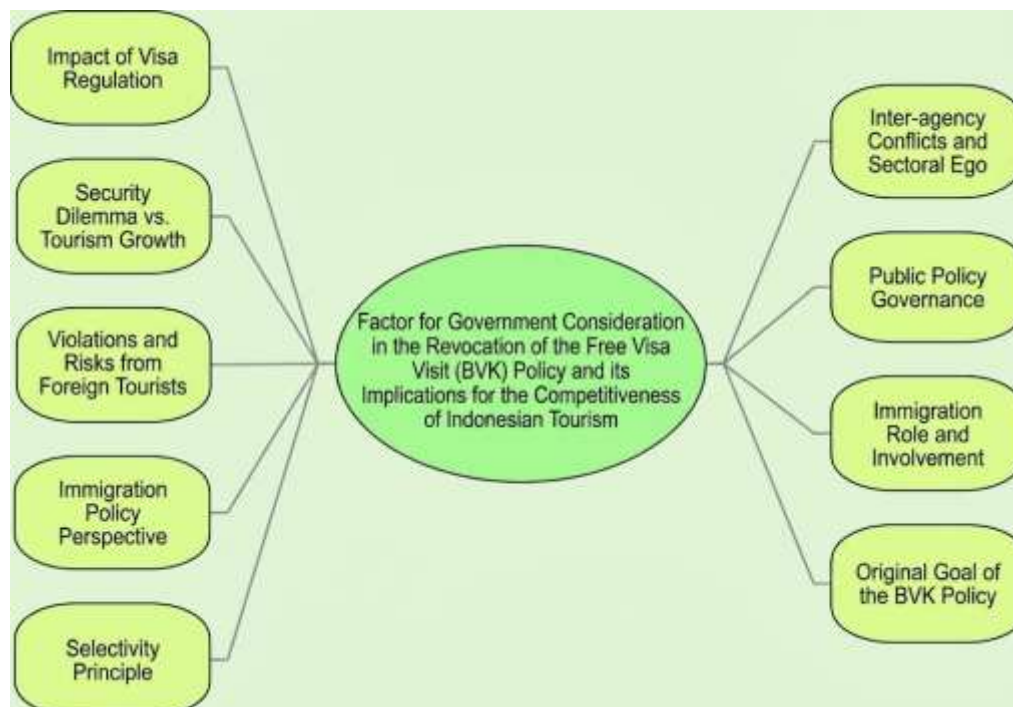


Figure 2. Government Considerations in Revoking BVK and Implications for Tourism Competitiveness

Source: Primary data was processed by researchers using NVivo, 2026.

Based on the results of data analysis using NVivo, the factors considered by the government in revoking BVK show that there is a complexity of interests between aspects of state security, immigration governance, and economic interests of tourism. The findings show that the decision to revoke is not solely driven by immigration considerations, but also by cross-sectoral governance dynamics involving inter-institutional conflicts of interest.

From an immigration perspective, ease of access through BVK is considered to have the potential to increase the risk of *overstay*, abuse of residence permits, illegal foreign workers,

and threats to public order. An informant from the Directorate General of Immigration described the evaluation of this policy as an evidence-based process:

"Our data shows an increase in overstay cases and residence permit violations during the BVK period. Not a number that can be ignored. The evaluation is not a one-sided decision there is field data to be the basis for it. We are not anti-tourists, but there is a greater responsibility that cannot be compromised." (I-3 Informant, Directorate General of Immigration Officials, 2026 interview)

The statement reflects the *selective policy approach* and *risk-based approach* that are the basis for visa policy evaluation in Indonesia, as explained by Triandafyllidou (2014) that the modern visa regime has developed into an instrument for security control and supervision of cross-border migration. This is also in line with the perspective of Guild and Bigo (2010) regarding the balance between *openness* and *security control*.

In addition to the security factor, the results of NVivo's analysis show that there are inter-institutional conflicts and sectoral egos that also affect the BVK evaluation process. The clash of key performance indicators (KPIs) between the Ministry of Tourism, which is oriented towards competitiveness, economic growth, and foreign exchange and the Directorate General of Immigration, which is oriented towards the supervision of foreigners, national security, and PNPB of visa services, creates an *unproductive regulatory deadlock*. One of the informants from the relevant ministries described the condition emphatically:

"There were moments where we really went our separate ways. Tourism pushes there, immigration pulls here. And finally, the decision had to go to a higher level because there was no common point at the technical level. That's not a healthy condition for strategic policymaking." (Source: S.I. 1, 2026)

These findings support Peters' (2018) *theory of fragmented governance* which explains that differences in bureaucratic orientation are often the cause of public policy disharmony. Howlett and Ramesh (2014) also emphasized that public policy formulation is generally influenced by the tug-of-war between interests between institutions that have different mandates.

In terms of implications for tourism competitiveness, informants from the tourism sector assessed that the revocation of BVK has the potential to reduce Indonesia's attractiveness compared to competing countries in Southeast Asia. In the global tourism industry, tourists tend to do *destination benchmarking* by considering ease of entry, cost efficiency, and travel convenience. Stricter visa regulations are seen as leading to a loss of potential market, as emphasized by Neumayer (2010) that visa restrictions are negatively correlated with the mobility of international tourists. However, Indonesia's competitiveness is also determined by the quality of destinations, international connectivity, and security, so the implications of the revocation of BVK must be understood multidimensionally.

Tourism Stakeholders' Perceptions and Responses to the Visa-Free Visit (BVK) Policy and the Opportunities for Its Re-Implementation



Figure 3. Stakeholder Perceptions and Responses to BVK Policy and Re-implementation Opportunities

Source: Primary data was processed by researchers using NVivo, 2026.

Based on the results of data analysis using NVivo, stakeholders in the tourism sector generally view BVK as a strategic instrument that is still relevant to support Indonesia's tourism competitiveness. Ease of access through BVK is considered to play an important role in building a frictionless travel experience and strengthening Indonesia's position in destination benchmarking between countries in the Southeast Asian region. These findings are in line with the opinion of Neumayer (2010) and UNWTO (2016) which affirm the positive correlation between visa ease and increased international tourist flows.

The informants emphasized that the main economic benefit of tourism does not come from the receipt of visas, but from the total expenditure of tourists during their stay in the destination. BVK's policy is seen as an *economic stimulus* that creates a *trickle-down effect* for the community around tourist destinations. An informant from a hotelier relayed his experience firsthand:

"When BVK was still in effect, European guests came more and stayed longer. On average they stay 9 to 12 nights, buy tours, go to the spa, eat at local restaurants. Once the policy changed, bookings dropped dramatically, especially from Europe. They said, 'it's complicated to take care of it'. That's a real loss for us." (I-6 Informant, Hospitality Business Actor, 2026 Interview)

This statement strengthens the research of Dwyer et al. (2004) and Hall (2011) on the *multiplier effect* of international tourist spending on various local economic sectors. On the other hand, despite supporting the re-implementation of the BVK, most informants do not want full liberalization without supervision. They support a selective BVK model that is adaptive and based on market segmentation, as explained by the informant Tour and travel owner:

"We are not asking for visa-free for all countries. What we ask is: prioritize markets that have proven to make a significant contribution. Europe,

Australia, Japan, Korea, they are quality tourists. Give them convenience, but with a certain duration, for example 14 days. More than that, it's okay, but you have to pay for a visa." (I-5 Informant, Tour and Travel, 2026 Interview)

This proposal reflects a *win-win solution* approach between the interests of the tourism sector and immigration supervision, a selective *migration policy model* as described by Castles, de Haas, and Miller (2020). In addition, the informant also emphasized the importance of integration between visa policies, digital promotion strategies, and tourist market segmentation, where young tourists are more responsive to digital platforms, while senior tourists still rely on conventional tour operators. This supports the findings of Buhalis and Law (2008) regarding the role of digital technology in increasing tourism competitiveness.

Recommendations for Policy Strategies to Increase the Number of Foreign Tourists through a More Adaptive and Competitive Visa Policy



Figure 4. Recommended Policy Strategies to Increase Foreign Tourist Visits

Source: Primary data was processed by researchers using NVivo, 2026.

Based on the results of data analysis using NVivo, the policy strategy that can be recommended to increase the number of foreign tourists is through the formulation of a *hybrid visa policy*, combining ease of access for tourists with a *risk-based approach*. This approach is not in the form of total easing or extreme tightening, but controlled openness that is carefully designed based on data and market segmentation.

The informant recommended the implementation of selective BVK based on the *focus market policy category* (*short haul, medium haul, long haul*) which has a major contribution to visits and foreign exchange. These recommendations are supported by informants who are concurrently academics and tourism practitioners:

"If we want to talk about an effective visa policy, it must be data-based. Who is our market? Where does the largest foreign exchange contribution come from? That's what makes it easier. Not all, but not none of them. Selective policy is not discrimination, it is efficiency. And the government must dare

to make policies based on data, not sectoral pressure." (I-7 Informant, Public Policy and Tourism Academic, 2026 Interview)

The recommendations are in line with the research of Neumayer (2010) and Li, Song, and Witt (2005) which stated that ease of accessibility is a major determinant of international tourism demand.

In addition to visa policy reformulation, the results of NVivo's analysis show the importance of strengthening inter-ministerial coordination through *collaborative policy making* and *cross-sector governance*. The asynchrony between the Ministry of Tourism, the Directorate General of Immigration, the Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is considered a major structural obstacle. Informants from policy academics described this situation:

"So far, each ministry has been running with its own KPIs. Immigration is calculated from PNP visas, tourism from the number of foreign tourists. The two indicators are contradictory. The solution is not at the technical level the solution is at the level of national policy design that must unite those two interests in a single framework." (I-7 Informant, Public Policy and Tourism Academic, 2026 Interview)

This perspective supports Hall (2011) who asserts that the success of tourism governance is largely determined by cross-sectoral coordination and public policy integration. In this context, the concept of *collaborative governance* (Ansell & Gash, 2008) has become relevant as a policy design framework that brings together economic and security interests.

On the supervision side, informants recommend the implementation of a digital *monitoring system*, *automatic warning system*, and *visa expiry notification* to increase the effectiveness of surveillance of foreign tourists without hindering accessibility. The concept of *smart tourism governance* is seen as important to manage tourists sustainably, including through a *digital-based* Visitors Management System to control the *carrying capacity of destinations*. This recommendation is in line with the research of Gretzel et al. (2015) and Buhalis & Amaranggana (2015) on the role of digitalization in competitive and sustainable tourism governance.

Overall, the recommended visa policy strategy is selective, flexible, technology-based, and integrated with national tourism development strategies, not only to increase the number of foreign tourists, but also to maintain a balance between tourism economic interests, national security, destination sustainability, and adaptive public policy governance at the global level.

Word Cloud visualization



Figure 5. Word Cloud Visualization

Source: Primary data was processed by researchers using NVivo, 2026.

Based on the results of word cloud visualization obtained from NVivo's analysis, the most dominant words are "policy", "visa", "tourist", "country", and "tourism". The dominance of these words reflects that the main focus of the discussion is on visa policy as a government instrument in supporting the development of the tourism sector in Indonesia. The large size of the word "policy" indicates that government regulations and strategies are at the core of all the informants' discussions, visa policy is not understood simply as an administrative rule for entry permits, but as part of a national strategy to improve the competitiveness of Indonesian tourism at the international level.

The appearance of the words "tourism", "tourist", "visit", and "destination" indicates a close relationship between visa policies and the increase in the number of foreign tourists. The informants assessed that visa ease is an important factor in attracting international tourists' policies such as BVK or simplifying the visa application process are seen as able to increase Indonesia's attractiveness over other countries and accelerate the growth of the tourism industry because tourists tend to choose countries with simpler travel procedures.

The visualization also shows the words "immigration", "supervision", "security", "regulation", and "compliance", indicating that the surveillance aspect remains a major concern in the implementation of visa policies. The informants view that the provision of ease of access must be balanced with a strong surveillance system to prevent the abuse of residence permits, illegal activities, and threats to national security. The function of immigration is thus not only limited to administrative services, but also as the front line of the country's sovereignty.

The appearance of the words "income", "industry", "business", and "sector" reflects the informant's attention to the economic impact of visa policies. A more flexible policy is considered to encourage an increase in foreign exchange through the growth of tourist visits who spend their money while in Indonesia the impact is not only felt in the direct tourism sector, but also in the hospitality, transportation, culinary, trade, and micro-business sectors of the local community.

The words "ministries", "directorates", "coordination", and "institutions" indicate that the management of visa policy involves various government institutions and requires cross-

sectoral cooperation. Inter-agency coordination is a critical factor for visa policies to run effectively and on target. Without good coordination, policies aimed at increasing tourism have the potential to cause oversight gaps and administrative problems in the field.

Thus, this word cloud visualization confirms that visa policy is always on two main dimensions that are mutually stressful: the dimension of economic competitiveness and security governance. The government's main challenge is not only to determine whether visa policies need to be relaxed or tightened, but how to formulate balanced, adaptive, and data-driven policies to support tourism growth without neglecting the country's security interests.

BVK as an Instrument of Tourism Competitiveness

Based on the results of qualitative analysis using NVivo, this study shows that BVK policy is perceived as a strategic instrument in increasing the number of foreign tourists and strengthening Indonesia's tourism competitiveness at the global level. The ease of entry through BVK is closely related to the behavior of international tourists who tend to choose destinations with simple, fast, and minimal administrative travel procedures, a principle that UNWTO (2016) refers to as *visa facilitation*. These results are in line with Neumayer (2010) who stated that visa restrictions have a significant effect on the mobility of international tourists.

Prior to the revocation of the BVK, informants from the tourism sector viewed the policy as a positive stimulus to tourists' travel decisions, especially from potential markets in Europe, Australia, and East Asia. In the perspective of tourism competitiveness theory (Henderson, 2006), ease of accessibility is the main determinant of the attractiveness of a destination. BVK is thus a form of liberalization of tourism access that aims to improve Indonesia's competitive position. In addition, the impact of BVK is not only reflected in the volume of visits, but also in the *economic multiplier effect* produced, reinforcing the concept of *Average Revenue Per Arrival (ARPA)* that the main economic benefits of tourism come from the total expenditure of tourists while in the destination, not from the receipt of visas alone (Dwyer et al., 2004; Hall, 2011).

Complexity of BVK Revocation Considerations

Although BVK is perceived positively from a tourism point of view, this study also shows that its revocation is due to more complex considerations. An informant from the immigration side emphasized that the ease of access has the potential to increase the risk of abuse of residence permits, *overstays*, and illegal foreign workers. In the perspective of modern immigration, visa policy is not only understood as an instrument of public service, but as an instrument of migration control and state security (Triandafyllidou, 2014; Guild & Bigo, 2010).

This research also found that there is a transformation of the visa governance paradigm towards a more selective and risk-based system, the government began to develop a visa management model through a combination of limited BVK, *Visa on Arrival (VoA)*, *e-VoA*, and electronic visas. These findings are in line with Broeders and Hampshire (2013) on the digitalization of modern migration governance, and Castles, de Haas, and Miller (2020) on *selective migration policies* based on risk management and digital technology.

In addition to security factors, there are conflicts of interest between institutions that reflect fragmented governance in cross-sector public policy governance (Peters, 2018; Howlett & Ramesh, 2014). The revocation of the BVK can thus be understood not only as an

administrative immigration decision, but as the result of negotiations of interests between the security sector and the tourism economic sector.

Implications for Competitiveness and Policy Recommendations

From the perspective of tourism stakeholders, the revocation of the BVK is perceived to have the potential to reduce Indonesia's competitiveness compared to competitors in Southeast Asia who still implement flexible visa policies. International travelers are considered to be inclined to do destination benchmarking, and more complex visa bureaucracy can lead to a loss of potential market (Neumayer, 2010; Fourie et al., 2016). However, visa policy is not the only determining factor, destination quality, flight connectivity, security, and tourism promotion remain important determinants of Indonesia's competitiveness (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003).

Most stakeholders support the re-implementation of BVK in a more selective and adaptive form, a *selective policy* that is a compromise between the economic interests of tourism and national security (Castles et al., 2020). Recommendations that emerged were selective BVK based on market segmentation, asymmetric duration policy (7–14 visa-free days to encourage initial visits), and the integration of visa policies with tourism promotion based on consumer segmentation (Buhalis & Law, 2008; Pike & Page, 2014).

In the context of policy recommendations, the ideal visa strategy for Indonesia is a *hybrid* policy, combining ease of access with a technology- and risk-based surveillance system. Approaches such as *e-VoA*, *digital monitoring system*, *visa expiry notification*, and *visitor management system* are seen as able to create a balance between *economic openness* and *national security*. Strengthening cross-sector coordination through *collaborative governance* (Ansell & Gash, 2008) and the development of *digital-based smart tourism governance* (Gretzel et al., 2015; Buhalis & Amaranggana, 2015) are an important component in realizing this vision.

Overall, this study shows that BVK's policy has a strategic position in supporting the increase in the number of foreign tourists and the competitiveness of Indonesian tourism. Its implementation requires adaptive, selective, and integrated governance with a technology-based supervisory system and strong cross-sector coordination. Future visa policies need to be designed not only to increase the mobility of international tourists, but also to maintain a balance between the economic interests of tourism, national security, and the sustainability of the management of Indonesia's tourist destinations.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, the Visa Free Visit Policy (BVK) has been proven to be able to increase accessibility and the number of foreign tourists to Indonesia, but its revocation was carried out due to security considerations and immigration supervision. Research shows that the increase in tourist visits depends not only on visa policies, but also on the quality of destinations, connectivity, security, and tourism promotion. Therefore, the government is advised to implement a more selective and adaptive visa policy with the support of a digital surveillance system and cross-sector collaboration, while industry players need to improve the quality of services and tourism promotion. This research is also expected to be a

reference for the development of more competitive and sustainable tourism policies in Indonesia.

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