

## The Role of social media (Tourist Visit of Arab-Palembang Village in Pandemic Period)

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### Abstract

*This study was conducted to describe the role of social media in optimizing Arab-Palembang village tourist visits during the pandemic. The method used in this study is a mixed method, which combines qualitative and quantitative methods. To collect research data, questionnaires, observation, interviews and documentation techniques were used. The results achieved from this research are that social media has a positive role in optimizing Arab-Palembang village tourist visits during the pandemic. As indicators of social media used, namely social media as a means of information, which is persuasive and becomes entertainment for the community.*

**Keywords** Social media, tourist visits, Arab-Palembang village.

### INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of science has clear implications for today's high technological achievements. Some human activities are now dependent on technology, if not as a whole, it is stated that most have involved technology in every side of life. Technology plays an important role in the economic process of today's society. As described by Utami (2021), that technological developments can make production better, making distribution faster to reach consumers. The economic process can be better when technology is used properly and wisely.

As one aspect of the economic process, marketing activities are now more dominant using technology. Conventional marketing is still being carried out, but it is believed that now it will be more effective if it is carried out on a technological basis. Another advantage is the lower operational costs incurred for marketing if it is done by utilizing technology compared to conventionally. Likewise, what was revealed by the Hanindo Mitra Lestari marketing team, is that many advantages can be obtained when marketing using the latest technology. Among them are a wider reach of consumers, measurable results, faster delivery of information and lower costs (Hanindo Mitra Lestari, 2020).

When referring to this phenomenon, then naturally when things are conveyed by someone through technology, especially social media, they will be easily accepted by others. The implication is that someone will find it easier to know about a current condition or situation about things that are not just around them. Of course, this does not only happen in the marketing of a particular product, but all activities carried out or services provided will be more easily recognized by the wider community.

Likewise in the tourism aspect, technology has an important role to market it. At least, through technology which in this case is in the form of social media, it can inform the wider



community regarding the existence of a location that is used as a tourist destination. Like someone who intentionally or unintentionally takes a certain picture in an interesting location, until it is finally uploaded on his social media page, it has helped the marketing process to introduce to the public about the intended location. This simple process is part of marketing, that's why it is stated that marketing by utilizing social media has a relatively cheaper cost but has a wider reach.

As is well known by the public today, especially in the city of Palembang is the existence of an Arab village (al-Munawar) as one of the cultural and culinary tourism destinations. The area has existed for a long time but has not been well known by the community because its management has not been carried out properly. However, in the end when it is managed properly it will have an attraction for the community because of its strategic location on the coast of the Musi River. At first it was only known by the surrounding community, but because of the variety of photos uploaded to social media pages, other people also wanted to visit it.

Such conditions made the Arab-Palembang village more widely known by the public. Until finally it became an alternative tourist destination that was quite favored because the costs incurred to go to the location were relatively cheaper. If you refer to the description above, it is clear that the marketing process has been running indirectly through social media. However, the Covid-19 pandemic has made various tourist destinations in Palembang deserted. Especially at the beginning of the outbreak of the Covid-19 virus which was declared so deadly.

However, the situation is now gradually improving. Although it is good to continue to carry out new habits by obeying health protocols, the community's economy has started to stretch, one of which is through the tourism sector which helps support the economy of the surrounding community. Based on the description above, the research team believes that it is important to conduct a more in-depth study related to the role of social media in optimizing community tourism visits to the Arab-Palembang village during the pandemic, especially at this time when people's concerns about the pandemic are no longer so high. In order for the research process to be more focused, the research title narrative was compiled "The Role of Social Media (Tourism Visits to Arab-Palembang Villages in the Pandemic Period)".

## **METHOD**

This research was conducted by referring to the mixed method (mixed method). Mixed Method Research is applied because the researcher wants a more in-depth response from the research process carried out, and involves the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods in one study. According to Creswell (2012), the mixed method is a research step by combining two forms of approaches in research, namely qualitative and quantitative. Sugiyono (2017) also emphasized that the mixed method is a research method that combines two research methods at once, quantitative and qualitative in a research activity so that more comprehensive, valid, reliable and objective data will be obtained.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data obtained from the implementation of the research, the data has been analyzed so that it can be presented in tables and diagrams. As has been explained, there are three indicators that are used related to the role of social media to optimize tourist visits to Kampung Arab. More clearly about each indicator can be seen in the following table and diagram.

**Table 1. Descriptive Analysis**

Descriptive Statistics					
		Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Informasi	5	64,00	92,00	79,4286	7,00540
Persuasif	5	64,00	92,00	81,4857	6,58595
Hiburan	5	68,00	96,00	80,2286	6,50378
Nilai Akhir	5	73,33	88,00	80,3806	3,58029
Valid N (listwise)	5				

Source: Data Processing Results (November 2021)

Based on the table above, it is clear that the respondents used in this research were 35 people. Respondents' perceptions of social media as a place to exchange information, especially regarding the tourist destinations of Kampung Arab reached a maximum value of 92.0 and a minimum or lowest value of 64, with an average value of 79.43. As for the social media indicator, it has a persuasive approach because there is interaction, reaching the highest value of 92.0 and the lowest of 64 with an average of 81.48. Likewise, the indicator of social media as entertainment which also leads to tourist destinations, the highest was stated at 96.0, and the lowest at 68.

From the average value per indicator, then in total, the highest value is 88.0 and the lowest is 73.3 with an average of 80.38. When studied in depth, the use of social media as entertainment is the highest indicator compared to others. Furthermore, the results achieved for each indicator are described in the following table.

**Table 2. Frequency of Information**

Informasi				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
64,00	1	2,9	2,9	2,9
68,00	2	5,7	5,7	8,6
72,00	5	14,3	14,3	22,9
76,00	6	17,1	17,1	40,0
Valid 80,00	9	25,7	25,7	65,7
84,00	6	17,1	17,1	82,9
88,00	3	8,6	8,6	91,4
92,00	3	8,6	8,6	100,0
Total	35	100,0	100,0	

Source: Data Processing Results (November, 2021)



Based on the table above, it is clear that it is by the description of the data contained in the previous table. However, the table above shows the number of respondents who reached a certain value. On social media indicators as information, the most respondents reached a score of 80.0, namely 9 people with a percentage of 25.7% of the total number of respondents. If referring to the criteria for high achievement scores, namely  $> 85.0$ , then there are only six respondents who have a perception of social media as a very good information tool. For persuasive media indicators, pay attention to the following table and figure.

**Table 3. Persuasive Frequency**

Persuasif				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	64,00	1	2,9	2,9
	68,00	1	2,9	5,7
	72,00	3	8,6	14,3
	76,00	4	11,4	25,7
Valid	80,00	7	20,0	45,7
	84,00	10	28,6	74,3
	88,00	7	20,0	94,3
	92,00	2	5,7	100,0
Total	35	100,0	100,0	

Source: Data Processing Results (November, 2021)

Based on the table above, it is clear that it is by the description of the data contained in the previous table. However, the table above shows the number of respondents who reached a certain value. On the indicator of persuasive social media, the most respondents reached a score of 84.0 which is as many as ten people with a percentage of 28.6% of the total number of respondents. If referring to the criteria for high achievement scores, namely  $> 85.0$ , then there are only nine respondents who have a perception of social media as a very good information tool.

For media indicators as entertainment, you can pay attention to the following table and figure.

**Table 4. Entertainment Frequency**

Hiburan				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	68,00	1	2,9	2,9
	72,00	3	8,6	11,4
	76,00	11	31,4	42,9
	80,00	9	25,7	68,6
Valid	84,00	5	14,3	82,9
	88,00	3	8,6	91,4
	92,00	1	2,9	94,3
	96,00	2	5,7	100,0
Total	35	100,0	100,0	

Source: Data Processing Results (November, 2021)

Based on the table above, it is clear that it is by the description of the data contained in the previous table. However, the table above shows the number of respondents who reached a certain value. In the indicator of social media as entertainment, the most respondents reached a score of 76.0, namely eleven people with a percentage of 31.4% of the total

number of respondents. If referring to the criteria for high achievement scores, namely  $> 85.0$ , then there are only six respondents who have a very good perception of social media as entertainment.

To understand the achievement of the final average score for each respondent, you can pay attention to the following table and figure.

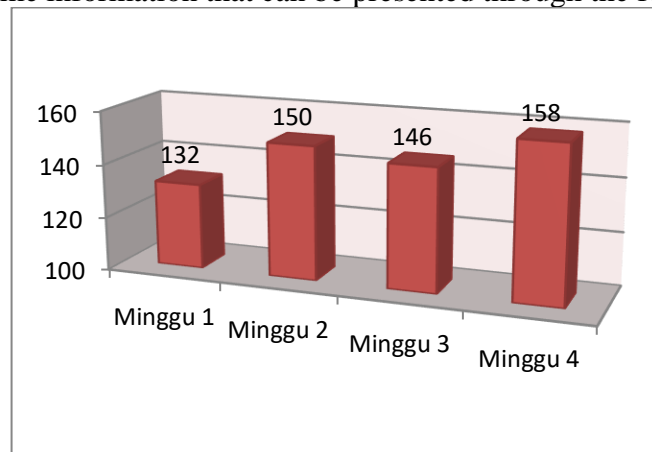
**Table 5.** Frequency of Final Value

Nilai Akhir				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
73,33	1	2,9	2,9	2,9
76,00	3	8,6	8,6	11,4
77,33	6	17,1	17,1	28,6
78,67	6	17,1	17,1	45,7
80,00	6	17,1	17,1	62,9
Valid 81,33	2	5,7	5,7	68,6
82,67	2	5,7	5,7	74,3
84,00	4	11,4	11,4	85,7
85,33	3	8,6	8,6	94,3
88,00	2	5,7	5,7	100,0
Total	35	100,0	100,0	

Source: Data Processing Results (November, 2021)

Based on the results of the analysis on the final average score achieved by the respondents, the respondents achieved various scores. If referring to the criteria for high achievement scores, namely  $> 85.0$ , there are only five respondents who have a perception that social media has a role to optimize tourist visits.

Based on observations or observations made by researchers in several weeks in Kampung Arab, there is some information that can be presented through the following picture.



**Image 1.** Number of Visitors in October 2021

Source: Data Processing Results (November, 2021)

Based on the picture above, it can be seen that the number of visitors in October varies every week. This number is visitors who visit Arab Village and not the surrounding community. That is, the number displayed is the number of visitors outside of the community around Kampung Arab. This is known from the majority of visitors using private vehicles and some also use online transportation. This is further reassured when random confirmation of the



place of origin is made, some even come from outside the city of Palembang such as from Lahat, Pagaram, OKU, and others.

To complete the research data, interviews were also conducted. The interview process was carried out by researchers to deepen information about the role of social media, several respondents were randomly obtained when visiting Kampung Arab. So this interview was conducted on three visitors and two people around the Arab Village tourist spot. First, the researcher confirmed several things to the visitors. First, regarding the visitor's knowledge of the existence of the Arab Village. Respondents interviewed stated that information about Kampung Arab as a tourist destination in Palembang City was obtained through social media.

Second, it is related to the social media used by the respondents so that they know that there is an Arab Village that is a tourist destination. The respondents who were interviewed had the same response, that there was a platform that was used so that they knew about the Arab Village as a tourist destination, namely social media Instagram and Facebook.

Third, the researcher confirmed tourist visits to Kampung Arab even though it was in a pandemic condition. Respondents gave various responses, including stating that the pandemic has closed the space to explore nearby tourist destinations and spend more time at home. Especially when there is a tightening or PPKM in various regions. Therefore, there is saturation in oneself so that when there is an opportunity to relax the rules, it is used to travel to places that are not so far away but enough to provide new experiences. Likewise with the opinions of other respondents, that they are already very stressed with the existing conditions so that they need space to have quality time by traveling. Therefore, the people who visited the Arab Village in Palembang City during the pandemic were people who came from the area around Palembang City. As was the case when the observation was carried out, although there were visitors from outside the city of Palembang, they were still in the province of South Sumatra, and when the pandemic occurred there were no visitors from outside the island of Sumatra in general.

Fourth, regarding the convenience of visitors when visiting Kampung Arab. Respondents generally stated that when visiting Kampung Arab they felt comfortable, because of easy access and there were many choices of snacks typical of Palembang City from the past, as well as the nuances of the Musi River that added to the warm atmosphere of traveling. Although there are weaknesses that were also stated by the respondents, related to the very limited parking space so that the comfort of traveling is often disturbed because they are worried about parked vehicles. Therefore, this element is important to pay attention to in order to optimize visitor comfort.

After conducting interviews with visitors to Kampung Arab, the researchers also confirmed the surrounding community. First, regarding the condition of the Arab Village tourist attractions during the pandemic. The people who were respondents in this study stated that, at the beginning of the pandemic, the Arab Village which was originally crowded with tourists suddenly seemed to have disappeared, because no one had visited. Even at that time, all businesses organized by the community suffered losses because they were not sold.

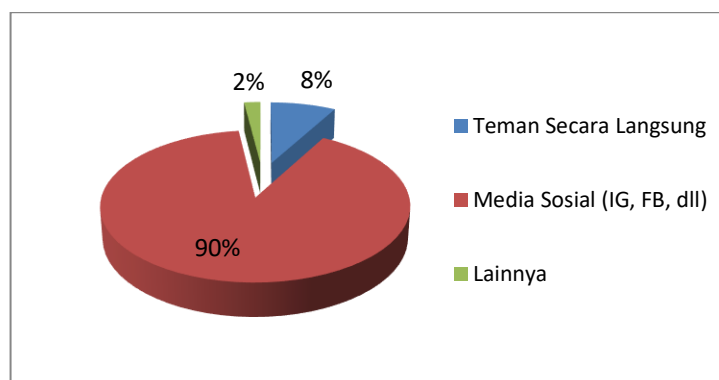
However, after the pandemic gradually ended, the Arab Village had started to get busy again, although it was not as stable as it was before the pandemic.

Second, related to the direct impact on the surrounding community, when Kampung Arab became one of the tourist destinations despite the pandemic. The community respondents gave a response that the existence of Arab Village as a tourist place is a breath of fresh air for the community, because they can earn additional income by selling various types of typical Palembang food from the past. Although it is clear that at the peak of the pandemic, people who originally had income returned to no income. That's why, the direct impact felt in the community is a decrease in income and make it difficult to meet needs. Grateful, because now it has started to recover and many visitors have started to come to Kampung Arab for tours. So that the production of typical Palembang snacks is back to be stretched to be sold and become income for the people around Kampung Arab.

Based on the results of research that has been carried out by researchers related to the role of social media to optimize tourist visits to Kampung Arab-Palembang. From the results of the data analysis, it has been stated that social media has a role in informing the public about the existence of Arab Village tourist destinations in Palembang City. This is in accordance with the indicator which states that social media is a tool for sharing information. So, in this aspect it has fulfilled the role criteria contributed by social media to inform about Arab Village tourism so that it is known to the public through various social media platforms (Instagram, Facebook, Tiktok, WhatsApp and

Likewise in the aspect of social media has a persuasive nature, because, through social media which contains information about Kampung Arab tourism, every social media user will interact actively. Provide questions and responses about the existence of the Arab Village. That way, the interest of other people to visit it becomes higher. That is why social media in the aspect of being a persuasive medium is able to optimize its role in supporting the achievement of high tourist visits to the Arab-Palembang Village even during the pandemic.

The same thing also happens to social media as entertainment, everyone who has social media will certainly upload their daily activities. Likewise, people visit Arab Village and then upload their tourism activities so that others can see them. For him it is entertainment, but for others who see it is an indirect form of promotion about the existence of the Arab Village tourist destination. Therefore, social media also has a good role to play in optimizing community tourism visits to Kampung Arab. As also asked in the research questionnaire regarding information on the existence of Arab villages, it can be seen in the following picture.



**Image 2.** How to Know Arab Village Tourism

Source: Data Processing Results (November, 2021)

Based on the picture above, it is clear that social media has an important role in promoting the existence of Kampung Arab tourist destinations. Therefore, of course, it also plays a role in optimizing people's visits to Arab Village to enjoy tourism and obtain snacks typical of Palembang City from the past to the present. The results of this study are in line with the previous one conducted by Abdurrahim & Zakky in 2018, which stated that social media has a positive role in travel interest so it makes a new concept, namely digital tourists.

Likewise, if you pay attention to the results of a study conducted by Wijaya in research on social media for tourist villages: a conceptual study conducted in 2016, that social media can have a positive impact on certain tourist attractions when referring to the concept that social media is a place to share information. Therefore, this research produces information that it is important to optimize social media in order to increase public visits to the tourist destinations of Kampung Arab-Palembang.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis of the data obtained, as well as the discussions that have been carried out, it can be concluded that social media has a positive role in optimizing tourist visits to the Arab-Palembang village during the pandemic. As indicators of social media are used, namely social media as a means of information, which is persuasive and becomes entertainment for the community.

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