"Impact of Instagram visual content on eWOM for Sharia hotels in Indonesia"

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IMPACT OF INSTAGRAM VISUAL CONTENT ON EWOM FOR SHARIA HOTELS IN INDONESIA

Abstract

The primary aim of this research is to investigate the effects of Advertisement Presentation of Contents (APC) and Advertisement Visual Types (AVT) on the eWOM of Sharia hotels. A quantitative approach was utilized, analyzing 202 Instagram posts from five Indonesian Sharia hotels between June and November 2023. The methodology involved the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with Partial Least Squares (PLS) analysis using Smart PLS software. The results revealed that visual content types, such as photos, videos, and reels, significantly enhance consumer attraction, with a path coefficient of 0.372 and a p-value of 0.000, indicating a strong positive influence. In contrast, hashtags and links showed no significant effect, with a path coefficient of -0.838 and a p-value of 0.000. The R-squared adjusted value of 0.208 indicates that the independent variables explain 20% of the variance in the dependent variable. The AVT's influence on eWOM is at a high level (f-squared = 0.042). These findings suggest that Sharia hotels should prioritize creating high-quality visual content to enhance their social media marketing strategies. The study concludes that effective visual content on Instagram can enhance eWOM and improve consumer perceptions of Sharia hotels, enabling them to compete with conventional hotels. These findings provide valuable insights for Sharia hotel marketers to optimize their social media strategies, emphasizing the importance of visual content over textual elements like hashtags and links.

Keywords	consumer engagement, customer perception, hashtags, Indonesia, quantitative analysis, Sharia hotels, social media strategy, visual content
JEL Classification	M31, M37, L83

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has experienced significant economic growth in recent years, primarily driven by consumer spending, investments, and government expenditures (Triansyah et al., 2023). A key contributor to this growth is the tourism industry, particularly the hotel sector, which has shown rapid expansion (Nugraha et al., 2021). As globalization intensifies, hotel leaders in Indonesia must focus on strategic planning, organization, operations, and management to remain competitive globally (Irawan, 2019). The development of the Sharia hotel sector is crucial for supporting the growth of Indonesia's tourism industry (Samori & Rahman, 2013; Susilawati, 2023).

The rise of social media platforms, especially Instagram, has revolutionized marketing strategies in the hospitality industry. However, there is a lack of understanding regarding the effectiveness of different types of social media content in promoting Sharia hotels and influencing consumer perceptions. This gap in knowledge presents a significant challenge for Sharia hotel marketers seeking to leverage digital platforms effectively. The scientific problem this research addresses is the limited empirical evidence on the impact of various Instagram content types on electronic word of mouth (eWOM) for Sharia hotels in Indonesia. Despite the potential benefits, the concept of Sharia hotels is still relatively new and not widely recognized compared to conventional hotels.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

The rapid growth of the hospitality industry in Indonesia, particularly in the context of Sharia-compliant hotels, underscores the importance of understanding consumer engagement through social media platforms. As digital marketing becomes increasingly pivotal, the role of social media advertising in shaping consumer perceptions and fostering electronic word of mouth (eWOM) cannot be overstated. Consumers now have the freedom to choose hotels offering satisfactory services at competitive prices, necessitating hotel strategies and performance alignment with customers (Harahap et al., 2021). The hospitality and tourism industries are interdependent, with hotels relying on tourists as potential customers (Warto & Samsuri, 2020).

Sharia hotels, which operate under Islamic principles, offer a unique value proposition by ensuring safety, comfort, and compliance with halal standards (Alam et al., 2024; Alam et al., 2023; Indriastuti et al., 2022; Muthoifin, 2019). This adaptation to Sharia principles is significant given that most hotel visitors in Indonesia are Muslims (Alam et al., 2023; Ramadhani & Mochklas, 2019).

The use of Sharia labels in the hotel tourism industry is unclear and still feels foreign to the people of Indonesia (Syahriza, 2014). Not many Sharia hotels dare to publish the Sharia concept, so the use of Sharia concepts has not become a widely known symbol compared to the rampant use of Sharia concepts in the banking sector (Fitriani, 2018). Sharia hotels' concept balances Islam's spiritual aspects, as seen in their management and operations. Of course, operationally, the services provided are the same as those provided by conventional hotels (Basalamah, 2011).

Social media refers to online applications, platforms, and media facilitating user interaction, collaboration, and content sharing (Kim & Ko, 2012). Arora and Sanni (2018) state that social media can improve consumer perception, explain consumer decisions, and optimize product purchases. Social media content includes text, images, videos, and audio and is consistently connected to many individuals and groups. Thus, many companies and government organizations are using social media to communicate with consumers and actively utilizing it for product marketing and advertising purposes (Kim & Ko, 2012).

Gao et al. (2019) argued that the implementation factors of social media advertising effectiveness by identifying the long-term effects of such advertising on social search still need to be explored. The benefits of social media for the hospitality industry are significant because it is a marketing tool used by millions of people around the world, and its reach is extensive (Hidayat et al., 2023). Indika and Jovita (2017) stated that Instagram, one of Indonesia's most popular social media, has a user rate of up to 10%. Based on this data, Instagram is a social media platform with great potential for promotion. Instagram marketing content is now classified as social media content (Syafuddin & Mahfiroh, 2020).

Social media marketing significantly impacts customer relationships and purchase intent (Kim & Ko, 2012). They found that social media positively affects word-of-mouth decisions when choosing Sharia hotels. Due to the uploaded Instagram content, the authors will get electronic word of mouth in response to consumer visits (Khalim & Hardiyansyah, 2021).

Studies on positive statements written by consumers on Instagram, either in the form of comments, likes, or recommendations, will be very influential, and it is considered a positive interaction between the company and consumers (Agustine & Prasetyawati, 2020). The quality of the information obtained and eWOM are very significant and positively impact the formation of the company's image, so it is an evaluation to improve the quality of information carried out on Instagram. Marie and Widodo (2019) revealed that in the study, the hotel should add and continuously update the website to be used as a review column and then used as a forum by hotel consumers for providing assessments. Besides, the link on Instagram will provide customers with information on making hotel reservations.

Gao et al. (2019) found that display ads are more effective than video ads, which is different from previous research. Besides, ads that use hashtags are more effective than web-links regarding search
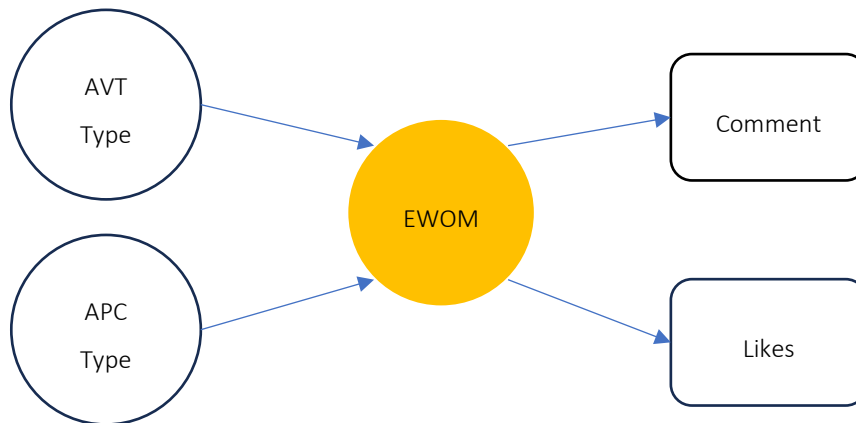
Figure 1. Research model

feature efficiency. The number of brand fans also affects the interest in advertising, so it is essential to increase customer interest through social media advertising. Audio, images, movies, and photos are social media content that has the potential to generate word of mouth and influence purchase intent (Kudeshia & Kumar, 2017). Product photos and images visually represent the product and help shoppers decide which product to buy (Teo et al., 2019).

The effectiveness of different types of social media content in engaging consumers has been a subject of debate. Gao et al. (2019) found that display ads are more effective than video ads, contradicting some previous research. They also noted that ads using hashtags are more effective than web links in terms of search feature efficiency. However, Kudeshia and Kumar (2017) argue that various forms of social media content, including audio, images, movies, and photos, have the potential to generate word of mouth and influence purchase intent. Teo et al. (2019) specifically highlight the importance of product photos and images in helping shoppers decide which products to buy.

While existing literature has provided valuable insights into eWOM in the hospitality industry, several gaps and contradictions remain, including limited research on the impact of eWOM on specific segments, such as Sharia-compliant hotels or halal tourism. There are also conflicting findings regarding the effectiveness of different social media advertising content types on eWOM (Gao et al., 2019).

To address these gaps, further research is needed to investigate the unique dynamics of eWOM in specific hospitality contexts, such as Sharia-compliant hotels and halal tourism.

In contrast to the previous study, this study aims to examine the effects of Advertisement Presentation of Contents (APC) and Advertisement Visual Types (AVT) on eWOM in the context of Sharia hotels. In this study, the hypotheses are as follows:

H1: *APC (Advertisement Presentation of Contents) has a significant positive effect on eWOM of Sharia hotels.*

H2: *AVT (Advertisement Visual Types) has a significant positive effect on eWOM of Sharia hotel.*

2. METHODOLOGY

The method used is quantitative, with data collected through social media from five Sharia hotels, including Noor Hotel, Cinnamon Hotel, Syariah Hotel, Horizon Aziza Hotel, and 99 Syariah Hotel.

This research will discuss how far the influence generated by social media advertising is both in the form of images and videos, and the type of content in the form of hashtags and links in electronic word of mouth (EWOM) conveyed through uploads or interesting content on Instagram. According to Senecal and Nantel (2004), online reviews from consumers are one of the electronic versions of word of mouth among consumers.

Online reviews are becoming more famous because consumers will first look at online reviews before finally deciding to buy. By confirming that the influence of social media advertising varies greatly depending on the presentation of visual and textual content, this study is expected to help marketing managers evaluate the predicted results of using various social media advertising methods.

This study employed purposive sampling to select Instagram accounts of Sharia hotels in Indonesia for analysis. The selection criteria included number of followers, with accounts having the highest follower counts prioritized, posting activity, selecting hotels demonstrating consistent and frequent content uploads, content diversity, choosing accounts showcasing a variety of post types and themes, and engagement metrics, preferring hotels with higher levels of user interaction.

This research was conducted by observing and collecting the data through Instagram social media. The sample that will be taken in this study is 202 posts found in five Sharia hotels in Indonesia, including Noor Hotel Bandung, Cinnamon Hotel Bandung, Syariah Hotel Solo, Horizon Aziza Solo, and 99 Syariah Hotel. Data were collected by observing each hotel post within six months, from June 1, 2023, to November 30, 2023. In this analysis, the data collected were processed using the partial least squares and structural equation modeling method (PLS-SEM) and Smart PLS 3.0, which was considered most suitable for this study. This research analyzed latent variables unrelated to the dataset's size and normality (Amalia et al., 2020). The instruments used in this study are the partial least squares (PLS) method, and the Smart PLS software is used in data analysis on data testing from respondents (Hakim et al., 2023). Similarly, this study was designed as an exploratory field study to test the relationship between variables and regression with dependent variables (Panggi et al., 2022).

Data were collected by analyzing each post by focusing on two variables: Advertisement visual type (AVT), which contains reels, videos, and photos, and Advertisement Presentation of Contents (APC), which contains hashtags and links. According to Gao et al. (2019), display ads include a photo or image view, while video ads consist of animation. According to Coyle and

Thorson (2001), between the two types of visuals (display ads vs video ads), video ads increase the real or living effect more than display ads because the acquired media has a deeper sensory dimension. Video ads are also similar to animation on television so that they will give a more profound impression on the audience.

Table 1. Variable measurement

Variable	Category	Measurement
e-WOM (electronic word of mouth)	Latent variable	Number of likes
		Number of comments
Advertisement Visual Type (AVT)	Dummy variable	Reels
		Video
		Photo
Advertisement Presentation of Contents (APC)	Dummy variable	Hashtags
		Links

3. RESULTS

This research was carried out from the results of an analysis on the Instagram of Sharia hotels in Indonesia with restrictions on five Sharia hotels that have many followers and are active in uploading content on Instagram. Data were collected using the netnography method. As a result of posts uploaded by Sharia hotels via Instagram, this study obtained data sources from the Instagram of five Sharia hotels.

Table 2. Sharia hotel profile

Sharia hotels	3-months Instagram posts	Number of followers
Noor Hotel Bandung	83	24.9 K
Cinnamon Hotel Bandung	24	10.2 K
Syariah Hotel Solo	39	7,235
Horison Aziza Solo	31	4,013
99 Syariah Hotel	25	1,077

Table 2 presents information on the Sharia hotel survey data, which has the name Noor Hotel Bandung Instagram account, has 24.9K followers, and has followed 176 for the last 6 months. There are 83 posts, both photos, videos and reels. Cinnamon Sharia Hotel, with the Instagram account Cinnamon Hotel Bandung, has 10.2K followers and has followed 118 for the last 6 months,

uploading posts in photos, videos, and reels totaling 24. Solo Sharia Hotel has an Instagram account with around 7235 followers and follows as many as 54 accounts, with 39 posts over the last 6 months. Horison Aziza uploaded 31 posts for 6 months with 4013 followers and followed 279 accounts with an Instagram named Horison Aziza Solo. Finally, 99 Syariah Hotel only had 1 account and 1077 followers and uploaded 25 posts from June to November.

Evaluation of the measurement model on SEM-PLS requires two tests, namely validity and reliability tests. Validity tests can be carried out by considering the validity of convergent and discriminatory indicators. The square root of the extracted mean of variance (SR from AVE) is compared to the cross-loading indicator to determine the validity assessment of discrimination. Suppose the root value of the extracted construct's square mean-variance (SR of AVE) is greater than the cross-loading value. In that case, the validity of the discrimination can be considered good if there is a loading factor with a value of less than 0.50 (Setiawan, 2018). Validity convergence constructs using reflective indicators are assessed using Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The AVE value must be greater than or equal to 0.50. If the AVE value is 0.50 or greater, the construct can explain more than 50% of item variants (Wong, 2011). The validity of discrimination is based on the principle that each indicator only needs to be highly correlated with its construct to determine whether a reflective indicator is an adequate measure of its construct. Different construction measurements should not be highly correlated. The indicator reliability aims to assess whether or not a variable measurement indicator is reliable. This reliability is done by evaluating the results of external loading on each indicator. A loading value of more than 0.7 indicates that the configuration can account for more than 50% of the indicator variants (Wong, 2011).

According to Aksoy and Abdulfatai (2019), Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is applied to hypothesis testing research. SEM is used to identify the validity of the proposed model. There is benefit from multiple connected correlations to measure errors in the prediction process.

Table 2 shows the results of SEM measurements, such as Composite Reliability (CR), Average Variance Extract (AVE), and Cronbach's alpha. The conclusion obtained was that the AVE value (0.650) was greater than that of Cronbach's alpha (0.481), more incredible than the Composite Reability rho a (0.543). However, the AVE value was smaller than the Composite Reliability rho c value (0.786). The AVE score is considered to have a good value if the value is above > 0.50.

Table 4. Discriminant validity

Fornell-Larcker variable	APC type	AVT type	eWOM
APC Type	1.000		
AVT Type	-0.080	1.000	
EWOM	-0.427	0.216	0.806

In Table 4, Fornell-Larcker criterion is used as another method to assess the validity of discrimination. Fornell-Lacker criterion is a traditional method that has been used for more than 30 years, which compares the square root value of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) in each construct with the correlation of each other construct in a model.

Table 5. R-squared value

R-squared value	R-squared	R-squared adjusted
EWOM	0.215	0.208

In Table 5, it is stated that the R-squared adjusted value is 0.208, which will always be smaller than the R-squared value. From the calculation results, it can be concluded that the independent variable in the equation model can explain the dependent variable by 20%.

According to Chin (1998), R-squared value is categorized as vital if it is more than 0.67, moderate if it is more than 0.33, and weak if it is more than 0.19 but lower than 0.33. So, the higher the R-squared value, the better the prediction model from the research model will be.

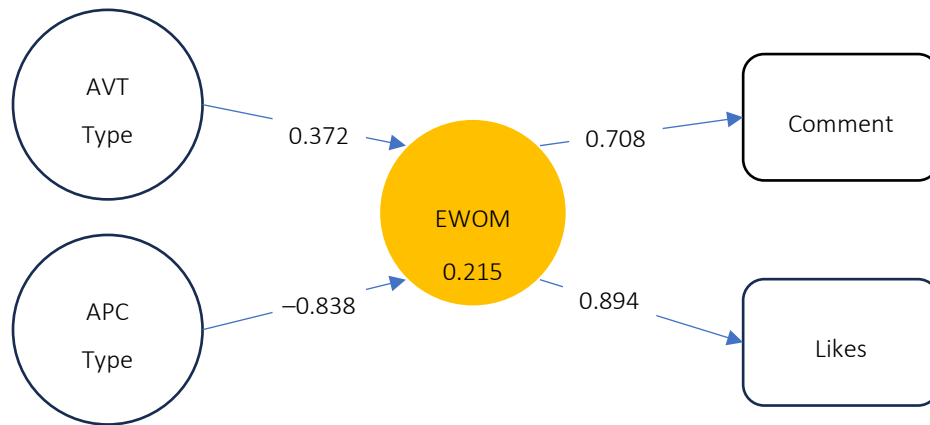**Table 3.** Reliability and validity of the variable

Latent variables	Cronbach's alpha	Composite Reliability (rho_a)	Composite Reliability (rho_c)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
EWOM	0.481	0.543	0.786	0.650

Figure 2. Coefficient results

Table 6. Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Hypothesis statement	Path coefficients	p-value	f-squared
H1	APC → e-WOM	-0.838	0.000	0.215
H2	AVT → e-WOM	0.372	0.000	0.042

The first hypothesis (*H1*) was not accepted because the value of the path coefficients was minus (-0.838) and the p-value (0.000 < 0.005), which means that the APC variables, which include hashtags and links, did not significantly affect the influence of social media advertising on Instagram carried out by Sharia hotels in Indonesia.

The second hypothesis (*H2*) is accepted, namely that there is a significant influence on social media advertising on Instagram carried out by Sharia hotels in Indonesia with a path coefficient (0.372) and p-value (0.000 < 0.005). This finding shows that AVT is an advertisement with various types of content, including reels, videos, and photos,which influences the effectiveness of advertising on Instagram compared to APC. The influence of AVT on eWOM is at a high level (f-squared = 0.042).

4. DISCUSSION

The results of the study stated that AVT is considered to have a significant influence on the eWOM of Sharia hotels through content that has a large number of likes and comments because, according to the Instagram algorithm, if reel content has a high appeal because of the idea in a content uploaded, then this will cause a large number of likes. The hotel can carry out continuous promotions through the best content and has the most likes, so it will positively affect the decision of Sharia hotel guests.

Facilities are considered to significantly influence the eWOM of Sharia hotels because higher the level of facilities will affect consumer considerations. Besides, content containing the speed of the room booking process from check-in to check-out and room cleanliness will affect consumers' decisions in choosing a Sharia hotel because of the speed of the process that will be passed so that it will not take much time. So, service quality is an obligation that should be fulfilled by the hotel in order to survive and continuously gain the trust of its customers. The uploaded content can also benefit visitors, the community, and the environment. The service was created to create a comfortable lifestyle and an extraordinary space everyone can enjoy (Mujib, 2016).

This study found that APC containing Hashtags and links was declared ineffective in marketing Sharia hotels in Indonesia. This finding is because consumers rarely search for other content with the same topic through hashtags. The hashtags on each post from the 5 hotels collected also focus on the name of each hotel, not a general hashtag that will appear with similar content from other hotels. *H1* is not supported, meaning APC does not influence the eWOM of Sharia hotels.

In *H2* AVT, which contains content such as reels, photos, and videos, which are stated to be very influential in marketing Sharia hotels on Instagram nowadays, consumers pay more attention to whether a Sharia hotel has unique and different content at all times. This phenomenon will increase consumer attractiveness in liking, commenting, and sharing content that has been seen more efficiently because if the content has a deeper sensory dimension, it will attract consumers' attentioneffectively. The impact of the large number of consumers who like reel content will also significantly affect the algorithm of the content so that it will appear more on everyone's Instagram and even always at the top of the list. The success of content in attracting consumer interest also increases revenue and future visitors.

Interestingly, the study found that visual content types such as photos, videos, and reels significantly and positively affect consumer attraction, while hashtags and links were insignificant. This result contradicts the findings of Gao et al. (2019) who suggested that hashtags are more effective than web links regarding search feature efficiency. However, Teo et al. (2019) support the current study's findings, which emphasize the importance of visual product representations in influencing consumer purchase decisions. The effectiveness of visual content in the context of Sharia hotels can be attributed to the unique value proposition of these establishments, which emphasize safety, comfort, and compliance with halal standards (Alam, Mellinia, et al., 2023; Alam, Sukmana et al., 2023). Visual content may effectively convey these aspects to potential customers, influencing their perceptions and decision-making processes.

Furthermore, the study's findings suggest that effective visual content on Instagram can enhance eWOM and improve consumer perceptions of Sharia hotels, enabling them to compete with conventional hotels. This observation aligns with the recommendations of Mujib (2016) who emphasized the importance of focusing on developing and promoting"halal" products and facilities in Sharia-based businesses. It is worth noting that the study's findings may be influenced by the unique cultural and religious context of Indonesia, which has the largest Muslim population in the world (World Population Review, 2022). As such, the effectiveness of visual content and eWOM in the context of Sharia hotels may vary across different cultural and religious settings. Overall, this study contributes to the existing literature by providing insights into the influence of eWOM and social media advertising content on consumer perceptions and decision-making processes in the context of sharia hotels. The findings highlight the importance of leveraging visual content and eWOM strategies to effectively market sharia-compliant hospitality services and compete in the rapidly evolving tourism industry.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to investigate the impact of Advertisement Presentation of Contents (APC) and Advertisement Visual Types (AVT) on the electronic word of mouth (eWOM) of Sharia hotels in Indonesia. Specifically, it was hypothesized that APC has a significant positive effect on the eWOM of Sharia Hotels (*H1*) and that AVT has a significant positive effect on the eWOM of Sharia hotels (*H2*). This study proved that AVT or Visual content types (photos, videos, and reels) have a significant positive effect on consumer attraction and eWOM for Sharia hotels. This study revealed that APC elements (hashtags and links) do not significantly influence eWOM for Sharia hotels. These results demonstrate the importance of visual content in social media marketing strategies for Sharia hotels, challenging previous assumptions about the effectiveness of hashtags and links in this context.

The novelty of this research lies in its specific focus on Sharia-compliant hotels, an understudied segment of the hospitality industry. By analyzing 202 Instagram posts from five Sharia hotels, this study provides empirical evidence on the effectiveness of different types of social media content in influencing consumer engagement and perceptions within this unique market. Sharia hotel marketers should prioritize the creation and dissemination of high-quality visual content to enhance consumer engagement

and foster positive eWOM. Less emphasis should be placed on textual elements like hashtags and links in social media marketing efforts for Sharia hotels.These findings can help Sharia hotels optimize their social media strategies, potentially increasing their competitiveness in the broader hospitality market. This study recommended that future studies should investigate the role of other social media platforms in shaping consumer perceptions of Sharia hotels. This research contributes to the growing body of knowledge on social media marketing in the hospitality industry, particularly in the context of Sharia-compliant businesses. It provides a foundation for further studies in this field.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualization: Azhar Alam, Annisa Sherly Rusiana, Isman.
Data curation: Azhar Alam.
Formal analysis: Azhar Alam, Isman.
Investigation: Azhar Alam, Annisa Sherly Rusiana.
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Project administration: Azhar Alam, Estina Rahmawati.
Resources: Azhar Alam, Estina Rahmawati, Isman.
Software: Azhar Alam, Annisa Sherly Rusiana.
Supervision: Azhar Alam, Isman.
Validation: Azhar Alam, Estina Rahmawati.
Visualizations: Annisa Sherly Rusiana, Estina Rahmawati.
Writing – original draft: Azhar Alam, Annisa Sherly Rusiana, Estina Rahmawati.
Writing – review & editing: Azhar Alam, Annisa Sherly Rusiana, Isman.

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