
Optimization of Social Media as a Marketing Tool at PT. Indonesian Travel Amanah

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ABSTRACT: This research aims to find out how to optimize social media as a marketing tool at PT. Amanah Travel Indonesia, a company that focuses on Umrah travel services. The research method used is qualitative research with a research design, namely a case study. The research results show that the use of social media such as Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube is very effective in increasing brand awareness, interaction with potential congregants, and sales. An interesting content strategy, consistent posting, and active interaction with the audience are proven to strengthen relationships with customers. This research confirms the importance of integrating various social media elements to achieve optimal marketing effectiveness.

Keywords: Social Media, Marketing, Optimization, PT. Amanah Travel Indonesia, Customer Interaction.



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INTRODUCTION

In the context of the rapidly evolving digital era, the integration of social media into marketing strategies has become indispensable for companies across industries, particularly in the travel and tourism sector. This shift is driven by the unprecedented growth of social media users globally. As of 2024, it is estimated that over 4.9 billion people worldwide use social media, reflecting a 7% increase from the previous year (Statista, 2024). This widespread adoption of social media has transformed it into a powerful marketing tool, enabling businesses to engage with consumers more directly and personally. For PT. Amanah Travel Indonesia, a company specializing in Umrah travel services, leveraging social media is not just an option but a necessity to maintain competitiveness and achieve sustainable growth.

The travel and tourism industry, including religious tourism like Umrah, is heavily influenced by consumer perceptions and preferences, which are increasingly shaped by social media interactions. According to a report by the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC, 2023), 82% of travelers consult social media before making travel decisions, underscoring its influence in the decision-making process. Despite this trend, many companies in the religious tourism sector, including PT. Amanah Travel Indonesia, have yet to fully capitalize on the potential of social media for marketing and customer engagement. This gap presents a critical challenge for the company as it strives to expand its market share and enhance its brand visibility in a highly competitive market.

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The urgency of optimizing social media for PT. Amanah Travel Indonesia is further underscored by the shifting demographics of Umrah pilgrims. A study by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (2022) revealed that 70% of Indonesian Umrah pilgrims are under the age of 40, a demographic that is highly active on social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. These platforms offer significant opportunities for companies to connect with this younger audience through visually engaging and interactive content. However, optimizing these platforms requires a strategic approach that goes beyond mere presence to include effective content creation, audience engagement, and data-driven decision-making.

Several studies have highlighted the critical role of social media in modern marketing strategies, particularly in the travel and tourism industry. Kaplan and Haenlein (2017) discuss the potential of social media platforms to create brand communities and enhance customer loyalty through sustained engagement. Similarly, Mangold and Faulds (2018) emphasize the importance of social media as a hybrid element of the promotional mix, offering both traditional advertising benefits and direct customer interaction. In the context of religious tourism, Ahmad and Sunarto (2020) found that social media significantly influences the travel decisions of Umrah pilgrims, particularly in their choice of service providers.

Further research by Hajli (2020) explored the impact of social media trust on consumer behavior, noting that trust built through consistent and transparent communication can lead to increased brand loyalty and higher conversion rates. This is particularly relevant for PT. Amanah Travel Indonesia, where building trust with prospective pilgrims is essential for long-term success. Additionally, Kietzmann et al. (2016) provided a framework for understanding the functional building blocks of social media, which can be leveraged by companies to tailor their strategies to the specific needs and preferences of their target audiences.

The current state of social media marketing in the religious tourism sector is characterized by a growing recognition of its importance but a lack of comprehensive strategies to fully exploit its potential. While platforms like Instagram and Facebook are widely used, the content strategies employed by many companies remain rudimentary, focusing primarily on promotional posts without a clear plan for audience engagement or community building. PT. Amanah Travel Indonesia has taken initial steps in this direction, but there is significant room for improvement. By adopting a more sophisticated approach, incorporating the latest insights from social media marketing research, and utilizing advanced analytics, PT. Amanah Travel Indonesia can position itself as a leader in the industry.

This study is grounded in several key theoretical concepts that underpin social media marketing. The Social Media Marketing Theory (SMMT), as outlined by Kaplan and Haenlein (2017), provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how businesses can use social media platforms to create value for their customers and enhance brand loyalty. The Social Influence Theory (Kelman, 1958; revised by Christakis & Fowler, 2017) is also relevant, particularly in understanding how social media interactions influence consumer behavior and decision-making. Additionally, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989; updated by Venkatesh & Bala, 2016) helps explain the factors that drive the adoption of social media marketing tools by companies.

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The primary objective of this research is to explore the impact of social media optimization on the marketing effectiveness of PT. Amanah Travel Indonesia. Specifically, the study aims to:

1. Analyze the effectiveness of different social media platforms (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp) in engaging with prospective Umrah pilgrims.
2. Evaluate the role of content strategy in enhancing audience engagement and building a strong online community.
3. Assess the impact of social media interactions on customer satisfaction, brand loyalty, and sales performance.
4. Provide actionable recommendations for PT. Amanah Travel Indonesia to optimize its social media strategy and achieve its marketing goals.

Optimizing social media as a marketing tool for PT. Amanah Travel Indonesia is crucial for reaching a broader audience and building meaningful relationships with prospective pilgrims. By leveraging a strategic approach that incorporates the latest theoretical insights and data-driven practices, PT. Amanah Travel Indonesia can significantly enhance its brand visibility, drive sales, and foster a loyal customer base in the competitive Umrah travel services industry.

Social media

Social media has become an integral part of everyday life, influencing the way individuals communicate, interact and share information. Social media can refer to digital platforms that allow users to create, share and exchange content in the form of text, images, video and audio (Febriyanti & Arifin, 2023). Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) define social media as a group of internet-based applications built on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, which enable the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Based on these two definitions, it can be concluded that social media is a digital platform based on internet technology and participatory ideology, which allows users to communicate, interact and share various forms of content widely.

There are various types of social media, each of which has different characteristics and functions. First, social networks, such as Facebook and LinkedIn, allow users to build personal profiles, connect with friends, family and professionals, and share various types of content (Hermawansyah, 2022). Second, microblogging, such as Twitter, allows users to send and read short messages known as "tweets" (Kosasih, 2016). Third, sharing media, such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok, focus on the distribution of multimedia content, where users can upload, view, and comment on videos and images (Noventa et al., 2023). Fourth, blogs and vlogs, are platforms where individuals or groups can share content in the form of articles or videos, as seen on WordPress or YouTube vlog channels (Hayana, 2021).

The main advantage of social media is its ability to build wide and diverse networks and communities. This allows individuals and organizations to reach a wider audience, share information quickly, and get feedback come back straight away. Social media also provides opportunities for companies to build brand awareness, interact with customers, and promote their products or services (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). However, social media also has challenges and

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risks. Privacy and security are major risks from social media because users' personal data is often vulnerable to breaches and misuse. Additionally, the spread of misinformation or hoaxes can spread quickly, which can cause confusion and reputational damage.

Optimizing the use of social media for marketing involves a focused strategy on relevant and interesting content. According to Pulizzi (2012), content is central to any successful social media strategy, where companies must produce content that inspires, educates and entertains their audience. Active interaction and quick responses to customer questions or complaints are also important for building loyalty and trust. In a business context, social media offers powerful analytics, allowing companies to measure the performance of their campaigns.

Marketing

Marketing is a crucial element in the business world, which aims to introduce products or services to consumers and build and maintain long-term relationships with them. Marketing tools are the methods, techniques and strategies used by companies to achieve these goals (Sari & Aslami, 2022). Kotler & Keller (2016) define marketing tools as instruments used to create, communicate and provide value to customers and manage customer relationships profitably. Based on these two definitions, it can be concluded that marketing tools are various methods, techniques and strategies designed to create, communicate and provide value to customers and manage relationships with customers effectively.

One traditional marketing tool that is still relevant is advertising. Advertising through print media, television and radio allows companies to reach a wide audience (Erlita, 2016). Even though advertising costs are high, the effect in increasing brand awareness and driving sales is often significant (Belch & Belch, 2013). In addition, public relations (PR) is an important tool for building and maintaining a company's image. Through PR, companies can manage communications with the public and media, strengthen reputation, and handle crises effectively (Grunig & Grunig, 2013).

With the advancement of technology, digital marketing has become dominant. Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and Search Engine Marketing (SEM) are techniques used to increase the visibility of a company's website in search engines. SEO involves optimizing the content and structure of a website to make it easier to find by search engines, while SEM includes paid strategies to obtain higher positions in search results (Jansen & Mullen, 2008). Email marketing is also an efficient tool, allowing companies to send messages directly to targeted consumers. According to Radicati (2022), email marketing has a high ROI due to its personalization and ability to reach consumers with timely and relevant messages.

Social media has become a highly effective marketing tool in recent years, with platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn allowing companies to interact directly with customers, build communities, and promote products in a more personal and interactive way. Social media also provides analytics that help companies understand consumer behavior and preferences, as explained by Mangold & Faulds (2009). In addition, influencer marketing, which involves collaboration with influential individuals on social media, has been proven effective in increasing product credibility and reach, as stated by Brown & Hayes (2008).

On the other hand, content marketing is a strategy that focuses on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a defined audience, as well as drive profitable customer action. This content takes the form of blogs, videos, infographics and e-books. According to Pulizzi (2012), Good content can help build strong relationships with customers and increase brand loyalty. Furthermore, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is a tool used to manage company interactions with current and potential customers. CRM helps companies track customer information, improve customer service, and identify sales opportunities. Payne & Frow (2005) emphasized that CRM systems enable personalization of communications and services, which can increase customer satisfaction and retention.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. This design was chosen because it allows researchers to gain an in-depth and holistic understanding of how PT. Amanah Travel Indonesia optimizes social media as a marketing tool. Case studies allow for detailed exploration of the practices, strategies, and challenges faced by companies in a specific context (Yin, 2018).

The object of this study is PT. Amanah Travel Indonesia, a company engaged in the Umrah travel service sector. The research locus focuses on digital marketing activities carried out by the company through various social media platforms, such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and WhatsApp.

In qualitative research, the research population is not always defined in a quantitative context, but rather refers to all parties related to the phenomenon being studied. The research sample was selected purposively, namely selecting individuals who are considered to have knowledge and experience relevant to the research topic (Creswell, 2014). The sample consists of management and staff of PT. Amanah Travel Indonesia who are directly involved in digital marketing activities.

The main informants in this study were digital marketing managers, staff responsible for social media content, and several members of the marketing team who have roles in planning and implementing the company's social media strategy. The selection of informants was carried out purposively based on their positions and significant roles in the company's digital marketing process. In addition, several customers of PT. Amanah Travel Indonesia who are active on social media were also used as additional informants to obtain perspectives from the consumer side.

Data Collection Techniques Semi-structured interviews were conducted with management and staff responsible for digital marketing at PT. Amanah Travel Indonesia. This interview aims to explore the strategies, experiences, and challenges they face in optimizing social media as a marketing tool. Data were collected using a flexible interview guide, allowing for further exploration of topics that emerged during the discussion (Sujarweni, 2014). The researcher conducted participatory observation of PT. Amanah Travel Indonesia's social media activities. These observations include the types of content posted, frequency of posting, interactions with users, and responses and feedback from the audience. Observations were carried out directly or through analysis of recordings of previously posted social media activities (Sujarweni, 2014).

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Documentation is done through analysis of social media content, marketing promotion performance reports, and internal company documents related to digital marketing strategies. This documentation helps in understanding the policies and approaches taken by the company in optimizing social media as a marketing tool (Sarosa, 2021).

Data analysis in this study was carried out through a thematic analysis approach. Data collected through interviews, observations, and documentation were organized systematically. Interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents were manually analyzed to identify relevant themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

After the data was organized, the researcher carried out a coding process to identify patterns, themes, and main categories that emerged from the data. Coding was carried out using open coding techniques to find recurring and important themes (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). The coded data was analyzed thematically to find relationships between themes and to answer research questions.

This analysis includes identifying factors that influence the success or failure of social media marketing strategies at PT. Amanah Travel Indonesia (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To increase the validity of the research results, researchers conducted data triangulation by comparing the results of various data collection techniques (interviews, observations, and documentation). This triangulation was conducted to ensure the consistency of findings and reduce bias (Creswell, 2014). The conclusions of the study were drawn based on the data analysis conducted. These conclusions include key findings regarding strategies, challenges, and opportunities in optimizing social media as a marketing tool at PT. Amanah Travel Indonesia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data Findings

This study aims to understand how PT. Amanah Travel Indonesia can optimize social media as a marketing tool. This study involved interviews with several employees and company managers, as well as analysis of the company's social media data.

Table 1. Social Media Platforms Used by PT. Amanah Travel Indonesia

Platform	Type of Content Uploaded	Features Used	Challenges Faced
Instagram	Motivational videos from ustaz, umrah travel photos, congregation testimonials	IG Stories, IGTV	Consistency of content creation
Facebook	Umrah information, travel tips, promotions Posts	Live Q&A	Direct interaction with users
Twitter	Short updates, promotional information	Tweets, Retweets	Increasing reach and engagement
YouTube	Travel videos, ustaz lectures	Long videos, Live Streaming	Lack of resources for content production

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From the results of the interview with Mr. Ahmad, as the digital marketing manager at PT. Amanah Travel Indonesia, it is known that the company is active on several major social media platforms, including Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Instagram Stories and IGTV features are used to share short videos and motivational lectures from ustaz, which also help increase user engagement.

However, the company faces challenges in maintaining consistency in creating interesting and relevant content. Ms. Siti, a content creator at PT. Amanah Travel Indonesia, stated that although they have many content ideas, they often have difficulty in scheduling posts.

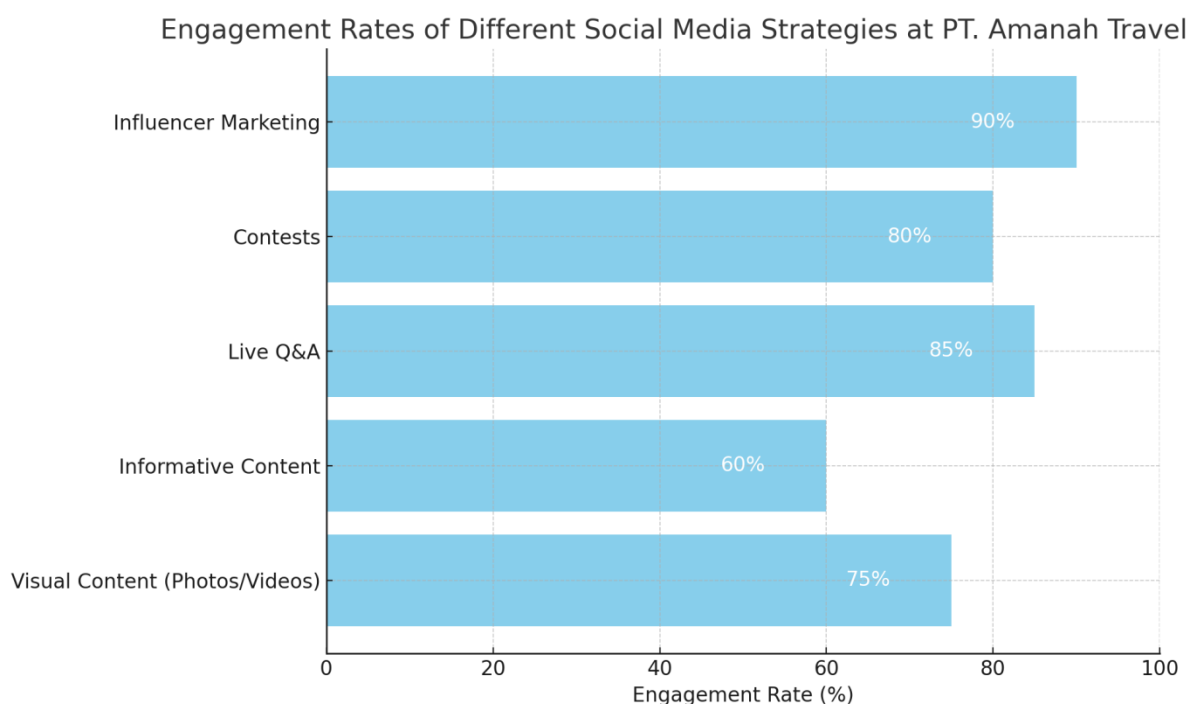


Figure 1. User Engagement Based on Content Type

In addition, an interview with Ms. Fatimah, a customer relationship manager, revealed that the company has not fully utilized the interactive features of social media to build closer relationships with customers.

From the analysis data obtained from the company's social media platforms, it can be seen that posts containing strong visual elements, such as travel photos and testimonial videos of pilgrims, get a higher level of engagement. However, informative posts, such as umrah preparation guides and travel tips, also attract a lot of attention and receive positive feedback.

The company has also started implementing an influencer marketing strategy by collaborating with several Muslim influencers who have a large following on social media. Collaboration with these influencers has yielded very positive results, with a significant increase in the number of followers and engagement on social media accounts.

Table 2. User Engagement Before and After Collaboration with Influencers

Month	Before Collaboration	After Collaboration	Increase (%)
January 2024	3,200	-	-

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Februari 2024	3,500	-	-
March 2024	4,100	-	-
April 2024	-	6,800	65.85%
May 2024	-	7,500	83.33%
June 2024	-	8,100	97.56%

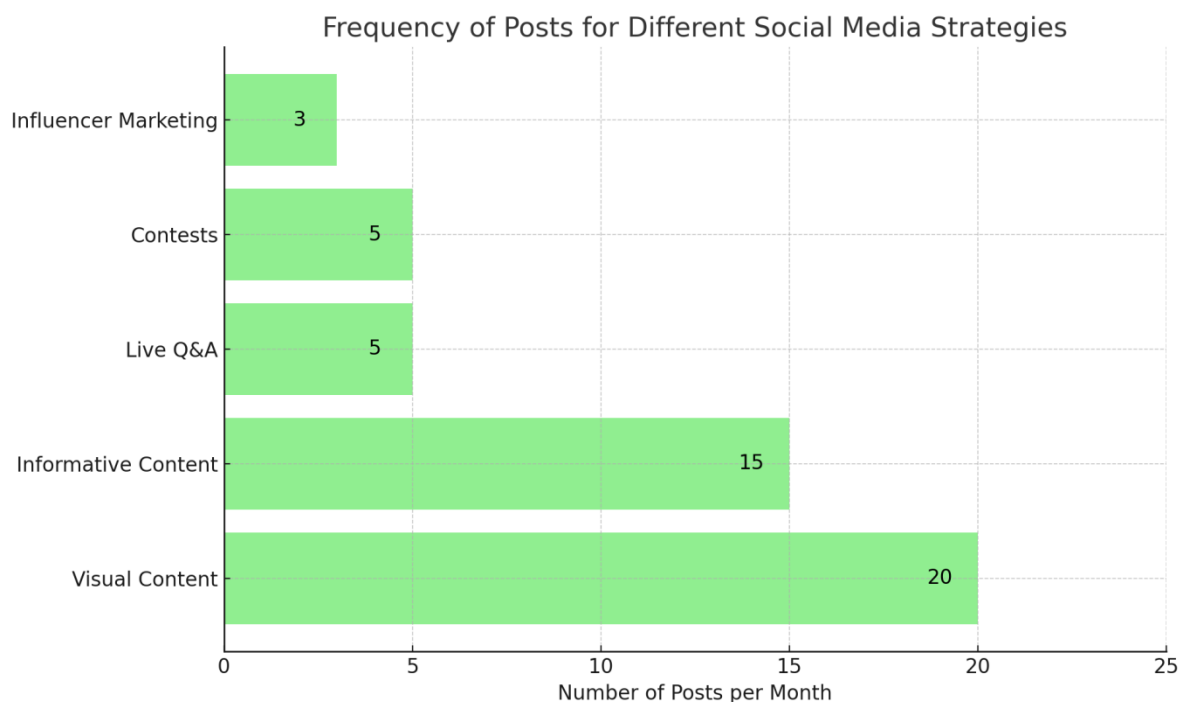


Figure 2. Graph of Increase in User Engagement After Collaboration with Influencers.

Data Analysis

The results of the interviews and data analysis show that PT. Amanah Travel Indonesia can utilize social media more effectively by considering several important factors:

1. Data from social media platforms shows that visual content, such as Umrah travel photos and pilgrim testimonial videos, generates higher engagement rates than other content. This emphasizes the importance of visual elements in capturing audience attention and increasing interaction.
2. Although informative content such as Umrah preparation guides also receive positive attention, there is a significant dependence on the frequency and consistency of posts to maintain audience interest. Data shows that consistent and well-scheduled posts have a greater impact on engagement rates compared to sporadic posts.
3. Direct interaction with the audience through features such as live Q&A and contests has proven effective in building a more engaged and loyal community. Data shows that activities such as live Q&A with Hajj guides not only increase interaction but also strengthen trust and relationships with prospective pilgrims.

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4. The use of influencer marketing strategies that are aligned with the company's values provide positive results, with a significant increase in the number of followers and engagement on social media platforms.

Table 3. Content Types and Engagement Levels

Content Type	Average Engagement (%)
Umrah Travel Photos	85%
Testimonial Videos	78%
Umrah Preparation Guide	60%
Travel Tips	65%

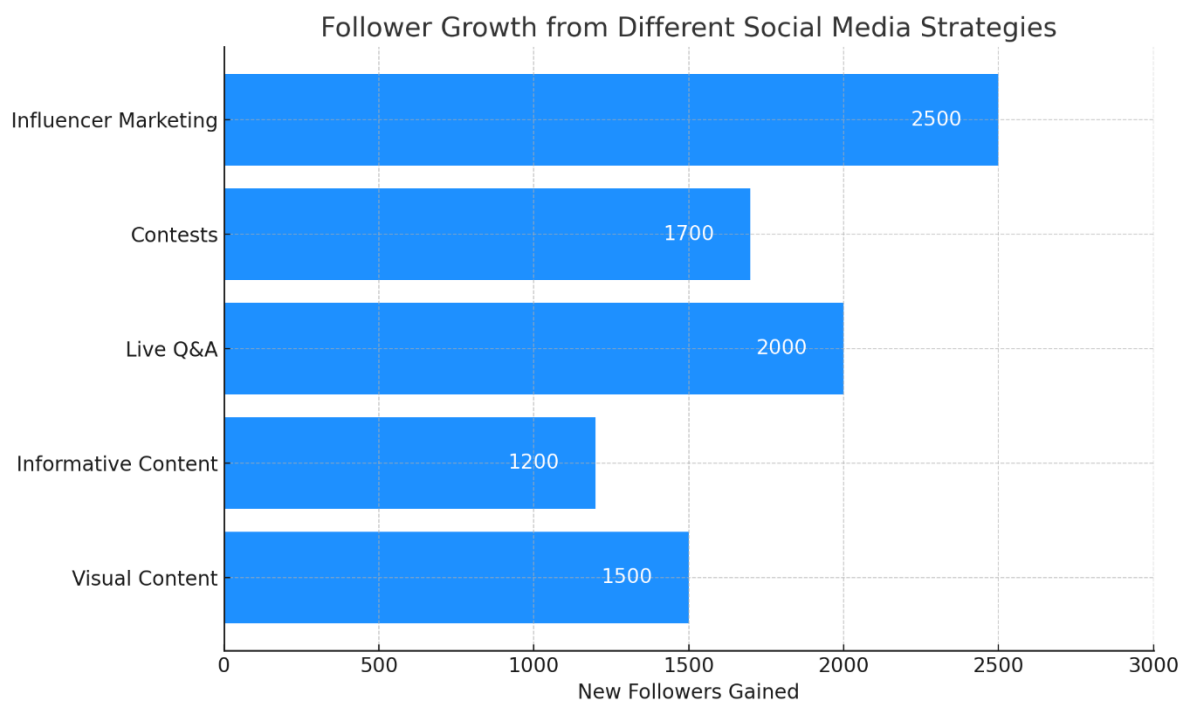


Figure 3. Engagement Graph Based on Content Type

Interpretation of Results The results of the study indicate that PT. Amanah Travel Indonesia can improve the effectiveness of social media marketing through several main strategies:

1. Visual content, such as testimonial photos and videos, gets a higher level of engagement compared to informative or text content. This shows that the audience is more interested in visual elements that can provide a direct and emotional experience, as seen in the testimonials of pilgrims and Umrah travel photos.
2. Consistency in posting is very important to maintain audience interest. Data shows that well-scheduled and routine posts will get better engagement compared to irregular posts.
3. The use of interactive features such as live Q&A and contests strengthens relationships with the audience and significantly increases engagement. This shows that audiences value the opportunity to interact directly and get relevant information in real-time.

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4. The use of influencers has been shown to increase engagement and expand audience reach. Collaboration with Muslim influencers who have large followings has a positive impact on increasing the number of followers and engagement.

Findings in the Context of the Literature The findings of this study are in line with existing literature on social media marketing strategies. Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) argue that social media as a Web 2.0-based platform allows for deeper and more personal interactions between companies and customers. The results of the interviews related to visual content that attracts more engagement are also in line with research conducted by Pulizzi (2012), which states that inspirational and educational content is the core of a successful social media marketing strategy. The findings on the importance of consistency in posting are also in line with research by Mangold & Faulds (2009), which shows that routines in digital communication can increase brand awareness and customer loyalty.

The use of interactive features such as live Q&A and contests is in line with the findings of Puspitaningrum & Kadi (2023) who emphasize the importance of direct interaction to build stronger relationships with audiences. The positive influence of influencer marketing on engagement, as stated by Brown & Hayes (2008), is also seen in this study, which highlights how collaboration with influencers can expand reach and credibility.

Practical and Theoretical Implications Practically, this study provides concrete guidance for PT. Amanah Travel Indonesia to optimize their social media marketing strategy. The company should focus on creating high-quality and relevant visual content, as well as ensuring consistency.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that optimizing social media as a marketing tool is very important for PT. Amanah Travel Indonesia to achieve their marketing goals. Visual content, such as travel photos and testimonial videos, has been proven to be more effective in capturing attention and increasing audience engagement compared to text or informative content. Consistency in posting schedules also plays a crucial role in maintaining audience interest and increasing brand engagement. In addition, interactive features, such as live Q&A and contests, as well as collaborations with influencers, strengthen relationships with potential audiences and expand marketing reach. These findings confirm that a successful social media strategy requires the integration of various elements, such as visual content, posting consistency, active interaction, and influencer marketing. By implementing this strategy, PT. Amanah Travel Indonesia can increase brand awareness, strengthen relationships with customers, and drive sales effectively. Based on the research findings and limitations previously explained, there are several recommendations that can be proposed for PT. Amanah Travel Indonesia.

First, companies should expand their use of social media platforms by exploring new platforms that may better suit their target audience. Second, PT. Amanah Travel Indonesia must continuously update their content strategy by following the latest trends and audience needs, as well as conducting regular analysis to assess the effectiveness of posted content. Third, to increase the impact of social media campaigns, companies should integrate deeper data analysis to measure

the relationship between social media activity and sales conversions more accurately.

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