



Analysis of the Use of Instagram in Increasing the Marketing of Weaving in South Central Timor, East Nusa Tenggara

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Abstract. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused tourist visits to drop drastically. This had an impact on the weavers in South Central Timor. This study analyses the role of women in improving the economy through digital technology. The method used is a qualitative method with a scientific approach to culture, women's studies, and aesthetics. The sample chosen is Instagram @tenun_ntt. Based on the analysis, it can be seen that the role of women in increasing sales through Instagram is very important. The women who own the weaving gallery create an Instagram that displays their collection of weaving. They actively hold Instagram Live to promote the weaving products they sell. Sales through Instagram covering various regions in Indonesia and internationally have proven to increase sales. Increased sales meant increased income for the weavers. An attractive product display design on Instagram as well as effective and responsive communication is one of their successes. Digital media is an effective way to increase sales during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Pandemic COVID-19 · Instagram · Weaving · Women

1 Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has reduced the sales of weavers in East Nusa Tenggara. Decreased sales because not many tourists come to visit. Weavers in villages such as Fatumnasi Village and Boti Village, South Central Timor, sell their woven fabrics to weaving gallery owners in the provincial capital (Kupang City).

The owner of the weaving gallery in Kupang then sells the weaving through digital social media such as Instagram. It is interesting to conduct a study related to the sale of East Nusa Tenggara Timor weaving which is carried out through Instagram social media.

The weaving gallery studied is the East Nusa Tenggara Weaving Gallery with Instagram @tenun_ntt. This weaving gallery was chosen as the research sample because it is consistent in promoting through Instagram.

2 Methodology

This study uses a qualitative method. The scientific approach used is a cultural approach, women's studies, and aesthetics. Data collection techniques through observation and literature review.

The significance of visual elements in culture has created a tendency towards what is called 'visual culture', namely a culture dominated by visual images and visualizations. Although visuals are conventional forming elements of culture, which have existed since the existence of culture itself, the development of information and digital technology has changed the visual appearance, which now has new characteristics and significance due to the important role of technology in its formation, especially visual technology. Visual technology). The development of visual culture has influenced the way people think and understand the world, which is now heavily shaped by the visual way of thinking, taking over part of the written way of thinking (Piliang & Jaelani, 2018, 77).

Based on the thoughts of Prof. Bambang Sugiharto stated that at this time he had entered digital culture. Digital culture is characterized by almost every action and interaction process today practically relies on digital technology (Sugiharto, 2019, 121). Referring to Piliang's thought which states that there are three spirits that drive the global world, namely the spirit of capitalism (economic spirit), the spirit of postmodernism (cultural spirit) and the spirit of cyberspace (technology spirit). The spirit of capitalism is the spirit of unlimited exploration of all resources (natural, capital, human, and other living organisms), exploitation of all forms of productive forces (labor, proletariat), canalization of all passions (sexuality, wealth, popularity). The spirit of postmodernism is the spirit of violating every boundary (ethical, gender, norm), denial of every single truth (scientific, religious, cultural), construction of all forms of binary opposition (masculine/feminine, East/West, rational/irrational, aesthetic/kitschy). The spirit of cyberspace is the spirit of channeling all urges of freedom (expression, communication, information), denial of all authorities (state, religion, family), the virtuality of all forms of reality. The three spirits do not stand alone but reinforce each other (Piliang, 2017, 31).

Instagram is one of the social media that develops in line with technological developments. Instagram founders Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger initially began working together on an app in 2010, but it was not focus on photography at all. Yet the myriad visual forms presented on Instagram accounts all contribute to the presentation of experiences, identities, communication and more that were examined within the practice of photography (Leaver, Highfield, & Abidin, 2020).

Subsequent developments Instagram users realize that their followers can become consumers for the products they promote. Currently, many manufacturers deliberately create Instagram to promote their products. They separate business accounts from personal accounts.

Regarding women in the process of production, marketing, and consumption, it is closely related to the presence of women in these circles. In her speech, Nani Suminarni, the founder of PEKKA (Empowerment of Women Heads of Families) stated that the production work carried out by rural women is not only a matter of economic transactions but also a matter of maintaining supply chains. Nani explained that there is a supply chain built by women, starting from production, processing, marketing, to the process of conserving production products. For example, in one area women are present at all

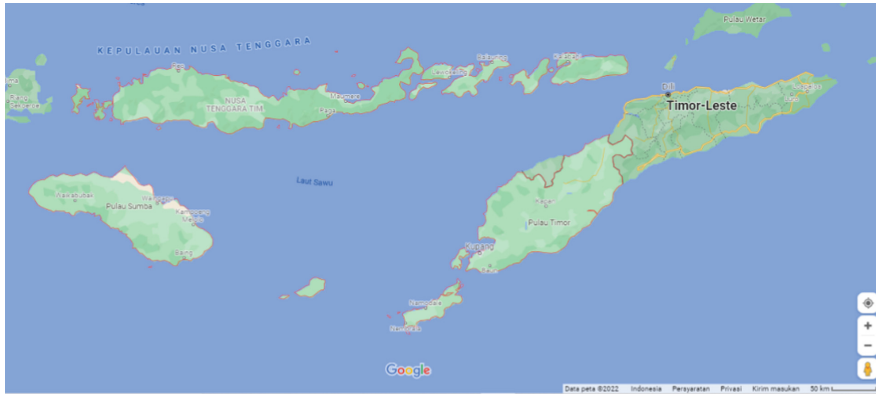


Fig. 1. Nusa Tenggara Timur (Source: Google map)

levels, there are women planting cotton, spinning yarn, weaving cloth and there are women who sell the woven products (Women's Journal, 2018, 151).

2.1 Weaving Timor Central South Nusa Tenggara Timor

Timor Island is an area of East Nusa Tenggara Province which is directly adjacent to Timor Leste in the north. In this research, we will focus on weaving from the South-Central Timor Region (Fig. 1).

The South-Central Timor region is divided into several regencies. In addition, the division of the area can be based on the ethnicity in the area.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused various tourism sectors to experience a slump. This happen because it does not allow tourism activities to be carried out. For the tourism industry, such as in the East Nusa Tenggara region, the COVID-19 pandemic has severely hit the economy of their people. Whereas one of the missions of regional development in NTT is to increase tourism development in the context of empowering the people's economy. Building NTT as one of the gateways and centers of national tourism development (New Tourism Territory). However, the mission is difficult to be realized throughout 2021.

On the other hand, the potential for cultural tourism, in this case woven cloth, which is the source of the economy of women craftsmen in East Nusa Tenggara Province, has not yet become a major concern of the government even though East Nusa Tenggara woven fabric that has good aesthetic and historical quality. Woven fabrics are an attraction for local and foreign tourists. In addition, East Nusa Tenggara woven fabrics have become a source of research on weaving in Indonesia, which has been done by many foreign researchers (Fig. 2).

Women are the main characters in the weaving process. They prepare the cotton to become thread. Next the women weave the cloth until it is finished. This weaving process requires qualified skills. Weavers must master weaving techniques and have knowledge and creativity in making woven fabrics. Weavers in the Timor Region produce a variety of beautifully patterned woven fabrics.

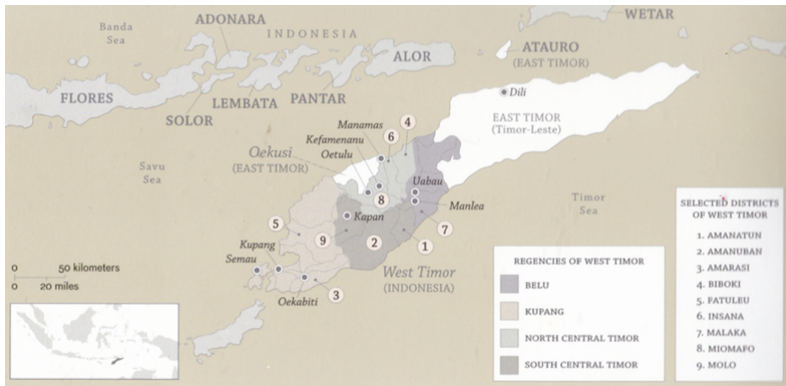


Fig. 2. Pulau Timor (Source: Barnes & Kahlenberg, 2010)

The Covid pandemic conditions make it difficult for weavers to sell their woven products. This is due to the lack of tourists who come to visit this area. To solve this problem the weavers then collaborated with the National Crafts Council of East Nusa Tenggara Province as well as various gallery owners or weaving shops in Kupang to help their economic conditions.

Mostly the owners of galleries or weaving shops in Kupang are women. Almost all weaving shops have Instagram digital media to sell weaving. Due to the pandemic condition and digital culture that has spread, digital media has become the main focus in selling woven products.

2.2 Instagram Media in Sales During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Instagram @tenun_ntt is one of several Instagram that focuses on selling East Nusa Tenggara weaving products. We select @tenun_ntt account since this account is the most consistent account in promoting weaving from its gallery. The owner of this account is a woman named Yosefina (Fig. 3).

Her followers are huge. It has about 6,251 followers until September 18, 2022. The number of photos posted in this account is 2,408 pieces. This shows the consistency in the use of Instagram as a sales medium. The posted photos are well displayed without being overdone. The woven products for sale are laid out on a beige carpet. If it is a cloth, then it is placed on the sofa. Scarves or pashmina are placed on the carpet, while bags, betel containers, and *sasando* are generally stored on the table. The photos displayed are quite aesthetic and focus on the products being sold. Complete data including product prices are very popular with buyers. Direct buyers may consider to buy the product if the price is affordable (Fig. 4).

Yosefina actively organizes live IG once a week in the middle of the week and once on the weekend. In holding the IG live, she avoided the impression of forcing costumers to buy her products. She created a warm friendly atmosphere. She also likes to share stories and knowledge about her weaving collection. On another show, she sells her used clothes in good condition. She honestly told me that her clothes are tight even though she was still enjoying it. The clothes made of woven are still very well preserved. She

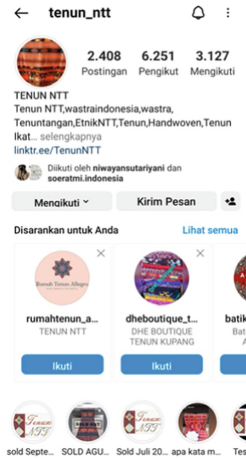


Fig. 3. Instagram of @tenun_ntt (Source: IG @tenun_ntt)

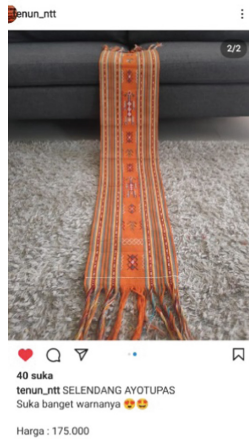


Fig. 4. The product and its price (Source: IG @tenun_ntt)

does not seem to sell or coerce consumers, but only shows how beautiful her collection of woven clothes is (Fig. 5).

In the process of viewing IG Live, the account owner involves her young child. The child already understands the process of promoting products through live IG shows. This shows that the account owner is a mother. The relationship between mother and child in the sales process makes the atmosphere warmer. The audience feels included in a harmonious family environment which is mother and daughter relationship (Fig. 6).

When referring to the theory used, it emphasizes that women are involved in the economic process, especially the distribution of weaving to consumers. Women have an important role because buyers in general are women.



Fig. 5. Instagram live 11 September 2022 (Source: IG tenun_ntt)



Fig. 6. Instagram live with her daughter (Source: IG tenun_ntt)

The use of IG in the weaving distribution system to consumers is considered appropriate in today's Digital Culture. Almost everyone has an IG. Previously IG was intended to publish personal photos related to someone's activities, but today IG is an effective digital media in online sales. The account holder understands the advantages of using IG for sales.

Account owners are able to display an image as a friend to their followers. The owner does not act as a seller who forces his/her products on the audience, but he/she tries to express the knowledge value of the weaving he sells and his personal experience with weaving. For example, the owner told about Timor, which becomes specialty of his/her family. This makes the audience do not feel as if they are persuaded by a salesperson, but as if they are invited to talk by the account owner. This image makes the sales process

run well. Through IG the account owner sells his/her weaving not only in the Kupang area of East Nusa Tenggara, but to all corners of Indonesia.

A professional attitude in receiving orders and sending them via express delivery services makes their customers increase. The products sold are marked with the words SOLD in their Instagram. This makes it easier for consumers who see IG impressions.

3 Conclusion

The conclusion of this study is that the use of social media Instagram is very appropriate for people in digital culture. The reach of consumers is very broad, not limited to the island of Timor, but nationally and internationally.

The image chosen by the account owner is kinship and shows the side of a mother with various domestic tasks, making the audience sympathize. In visual culture which is then displayed in digital media, account owners pay attention to the aesthetic value in displaying their products.

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