



Public relations plaza hotel semarang strategy: creating and maintaining a positive public image

Joseph Aldo Irawan¹, Emik Rahayu², Chondro Suryono¹, Fitriatunnisa Shabrina³, Dian Fitriyana³

¹Department of Hospitality Management, Politeknik Pariwisata Prima Internasional, Indonesia

²Department of Hospitality Managemen, Universitas Dian Nuswantoro, Indonesia

³Department of Convention and Event, Politeknik Pariwisata Prima Internasional, Indonesia

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52465/jogasto.v2i1.284>

Article Info

Article history:

Received Jan 8, 2023

Revised Feb 10, 2024

Accepted Feb 16, 2024

Keywords:

Hotel

Positive image

Public relations

ABSTRACT

In the business world, having a good image is undoubtedly something that needs to be considered. This good image can be a way of income, especially for Plaza Hotel Semarang. Unfortunately, problems have arisen in the past and dragged on until now. This study aims to determine the public relations strategy to create and maintain a positive image of Plaza Hotel Semarang. The research method used to obtain quality data is through interviews and literature studies on related issues. The result is that Plaza Hotel Semarang has begun to design a new strategy to change its image among the wider community. However, some internal problems require special attention to be addressed first, especially in human resources. The researcher also listed several related inputs that are constructive and can be implemented appropriately for Plaza Hotel Semarang.

This is an open access article under the [CC BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) license.



1. Introduction

When a traveller going to travel, they will need accommodation to stay on the city. The traveller can use some ways to get some information about recommendation for their stay. Currently, before they doing the travel, they will looking for accommodation especially hotel using the online application. After find some recommendation, many of the traveller

¹ Corresponding Author:

Joseph Aldo Irawan,
Department of Post Graduated Program Tourism Planning & Development,
NHI Bandung Tourism Polytechnic,
Indonesia.
Email: josephaldo99@gmail.com

will reads the review as a suggestion before the make their mind to stay in the hotel. The image of a hotel is essential for potential guests. This conception has become common among people today, especially connoisseurs of hotel services. Therefore, every hotel needs a good public relations image [1]. Public relations is a thing that includes many things and many people in it [2]. Public relations is often associated with strategies so that a hotel or organization can be liked by any party [3], [4]. Therefore, every hotel must certainly prepare a strategy to maintain a positive image of the hotel through public relations performance [5]. Please note that in social order, public opinion has a crucial role in it. Through this public opinion, we can find a point of view on the pros and cons of a problem or phenomenon around us. The problem faced by Plaza Hotel Semarang at this time is about changing its image from the previous negative image, starting to switch to a positive image in 2018. This effort certainly requires the right energy and strategy to ensure satisfactory results. With the optimization of human resource capabilities, the potential to be utilized becomes enormous [6]. Based on existing problems, Plaza Hotel Semarang began to strengthen the public relations side to become the primary weapon in the community. The idea comes so that the positive image of Plaza Hotel Semarang can be brighter and remain positive in the eyes of the public. Thus, Plaza Hotel Semarang must create strategies around hotel services to maintain its positive image. In addition, Plaza Hotel Semarang must also be able to analyze business competition conditions through promotions that always develop at any time [7], [8].

2. Literature Review

2.1. Hotel

Accommodation services that are close to travelers or travelers are certain hotels. The hotel is an option for enthusiasts to enjoy the dishes and services provided by the hotel by paying a certain amount of rupiah. A hotel is a type of accommodation that provides commercial lodging services and food for others [9]. In the previous explanation, the classification of hotel types to determine things that smell like legal filing will be further deepened. Hotels can be classified based on the following: room size, room shape, minimum number of rooms, service, and length of operation time [10].

2.2. Public Relations

Public relations is often known as public relations (public relations). Public relations is one of the social activities where an individual establishes a relationship between individuals and groups for specific purposes. This goal usually establishes relationships between fellow humans or for business purposes. A small example of public relations activities with daily activities is gathering with neighbors, co-workers, or friends in the neighborhood. Public relations activities also have an essential role in a company by gathering activities in the social environment and establishing relationships between individuals. Its vital role is to be one of the efforts for companies to brand a service or product that will be marketed to the broader community. Therefore, public relations must be a point that needs to be considered for a company.

Public relations consists of 2 syllables. The word "public" means a group of people who pay attention to something with similar urgency. While the word "relations" means reciprocal relationship, "two-way communication". Thus, public relations can be interpreted as an activity to establish communication with a group of people to achieve specific goals. According to [11], the principle of public relations activities is that all activities or things must ensure a positive public image. In its implementation, of course, achieving the goals of public relations requires a strategic order that is arranged in such a way as to find the proper steps. According to [12], public relations has four stages of strategic planning: defining problems, planning and programming, taking action and communication, and evaluating programs (2006: 409). Here is the process of planning a public relations strategy:

Table 1. Process of planning public relations strategy [13], [14]

Process of Planning a Public Relations Strategy	
Planning Stages	Strategic Planning Steps and Program Outline
Defining the Problem	What problems, concerns, or opportunities are happening Situation analysis (Internal-External) Program objectives
Planning and Programming	Target public
Taking Action and Communication	Goals to reach Action Strategy Communication strategy (message to be conveyed to the public) Implementation plan Evaluation plan Program feedback and adjustments

Table 1 shows that the four stages of public relations strategy development can later be used as a reference in research. At first glance, we can see the equation of strategy stages in Table 1 with the POAC strategy (planning, organizing, actuating, controlling). However, the public relations strategy in Table 1 further explains the detailed stages along with the steps that must be taken to achieve alignment of public relations goals. In addition, public relations strategies also have a relationship with their influence in society. Efforts to find out this can be done through the pattern "The 3C's Option". The pattern "The 3C's Option" consists of Conservation, Change, and Crystallization [15]. The conservation pattern focuses on active opinions on positive statements (proponents). In contrast, change focuses on opinions active on negative statements (opposition), and crystallization focuses on opinions passive (uncommitted).

2.3. Positive Image

Image is a representation of a company or individual or goods and services. Image is often used as a social guideline to see and judge something or someone from a certain point of view. Image is the impression and perception of the public (potential customers) of everything that is a company's identity [16]. The image will be fundamental and significantly influence a decision to choose a product or company. The image will affect consumers' purchasing power of brand loyalty [17]. Based on public image, of course, a company must be able to create a positive image in the eyes of potential customers and among the general public. All of that will later affect the company's sustainability process.

The process of forming an image is a long thing. All of it requires a relatively long process. This process can be described as follows:

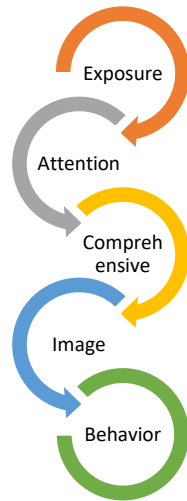


Figure 1. The process of corporate image formation [18]

Figure 1 explains that five processes must be passed to create a company image. This process is interrelated and starts from an attraction that ultimately attracts the attention of potential customers. The use of grammar is essential for promotion [19]. Ultimately, it can broadly influence society so that a specific image is formed. If this is seen or heard at any time, it makes a habit that indirectly forms an image among the wider community.

2.4. Public Opinion

Public opinion is an assessment of something in the public sphere from the public's point of view. Public opinion is vital for potential tourists because they can find reviews about tourist destinations [20]. Based on previous statements, opinions here become benchmarks both directly and indirectly that affect the interest of potential tourists. Maintaining reasonable public opinion is a must for every tourist attraction owner. A positive public opinion can boost the sales values of the services offered to prospective tourists.

2.5. Pers

With public relations, it must be connected to the press. The press here has a massive role in the social environment, both on a small scale and a broader scale. The press can be interpreted as printed media, such as daily newspapers, weeklies, magazines, and bulletins, while electronic media include radio, film, and television [21]. Based on historical knowledge, the press is an institute of community empowerment and a tool of the nation's struggle. All because through the press, all aspirations can be conveyed to the public space.

3. Method

This study used a qualitative descriptive method. According to [22], descriptive research investigates the situation and conditions that have been mentioned in the results of

exposure in the form of a research report. Meanwhile, according to [23] explained that qualitative descriptive research is:

"The method based on the philosophy of postpositivism is to examine natural objects, and the researcher is tasked with describing the situation objectively (based on visible facts)."

This research is supported by data collection through interviews, documentation, and literature review. Interviews are one of the crucial techniques that are often used in efforts to find and obtain data. According to Black and Champion [24], an interview is a verbal communication (spoken) to obtain information. An interview also has the brief meaning of a conversation over a purpose. Generally, an interview is a communication activity between two (2) or more people in a place or media to discuss or ask questions about a particular topic to explore information.

In comparison, documentation is a data collection technique that is widely used in every research. The results of documentation can be in the form of photos, historical records, stories, biographies, regulations, policies, and so on. A study, of course, requires literature references related to the research being carried out. This literature reference is one of the data collection techniques used by researchers in this study. According to Sarwono [25], a literature study is an activity to study reference sources that help obtain a theoretical basis for researching the discussion. Literature studies can be found in research journals, books, mass media, and the internet. After all data is collected, it will be processed using triangulation techniques. According to Sugiyono [26], triangulation is a technique that combines several data collection techniques and related data sources.

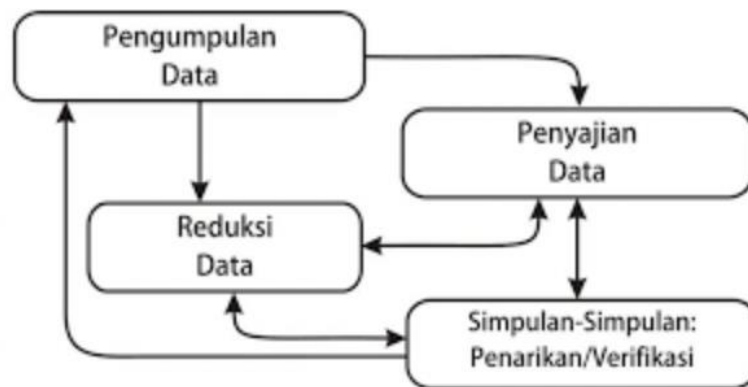


Figure 2. Data Collection Process [27]

Figure 2 show the processing way of data been collected. Start from collecting data, the data can be reduction first or can be shown as good as it is been collected. After that, the researcher will got some conclusion and do some verification on the data before the data been published on the papers.

4. Results and Discussion

Plaza Hotel has been one of the oldest hotels in the city of Semarang since 1990; by being one of the oldest hotels, the existence of Plaza Hotels is already known by the wider community, especially the people of the city of Semarang. This existence certainly has

positive values and negative values. This negative value is because the Plaza Hotel is a hotel with the image of “the nighttime Hotel” in ancient times. The positive value is that although it is an old hotel, it still keeps up with the times. Plaza Hotel Semarang has also joined an impactful online review platform, TripAdvisor. It is known that since 2014, Plaza Hotel Semarang has received 14 reviews; the last review stopped in February 2020. The fact shows there has yet to be any new review for Plaza Hotel Semarang done through online reviews. Based on 14 reviews, there are only three positive reviews (4 and 5 stars), and the rest are bad reviews (1 to 3 stars).



Figure 3. Review from trip advisor

Plaza Hotel has always tried to do branding for the image of its hotel. All staff are involved as public relations who must consistently create and maintain a positive image of the hotel among the general public. One way they have done this is by participating in or joining several event groups to facilitate venues for the implementation of an event as an effort to establish initial relationships. This stage of establishing relationships is also known as the introduction stage. All employees carry out This introduction stage directly in the context of marketing until managers also carry out marketing actions directly or indirectly.

Plaza Hotel Semarang has also carried a new motto called "Plaza Hijrah." This new motto began to be echoed in 2019. This slogan aims to inform society that Plaza Hotel Semarang is shifting from its previous image, from a negative public view to a more positive direction, such as general changes in the hotel's function. Hopefully, this new motto can be a positive breakthrough in Plaza Hotel Semarang's "New Branding" effort. In the evaluation process of Plaza Hotel Semarang, several factors were found that affect the image of the hotel in the community, shown in Figure 3 below:

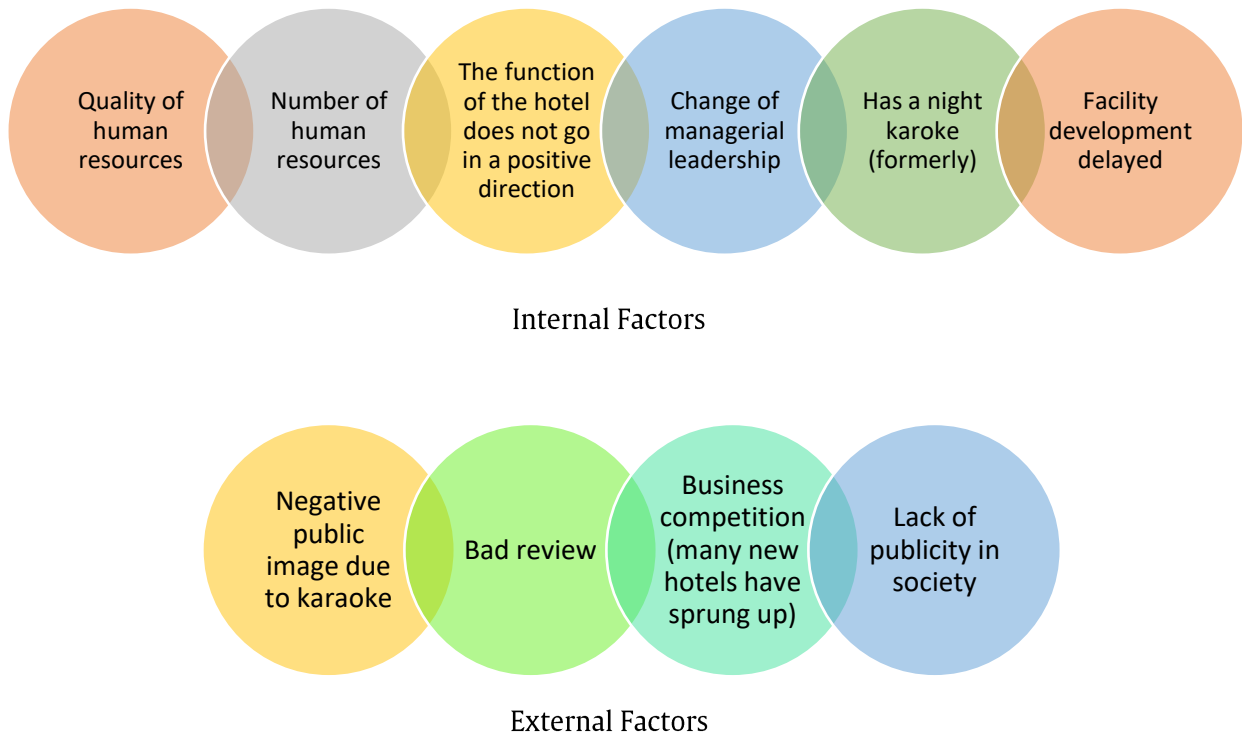


Figure 4. Internal and external factors [28]–[30]

Based on the data shown in Figure 4, it is explained that internal and external factors influence the results of identifying image problems from Plaza Hotel Semarang. In addition, based on an interview with one of the speakers, it is known that the general problem with the image of Plaza Hotel Semarang is the exterior, which is still an old model and requires mass education. According to [28], "the image of the Plaza Hotel has changed; once famous as an entertainment hotel, now it has changed to a MICE (Meeting, Incentive, Conference, Exhibition) hotel." Based on internal factors, it is found that many of the above problems are known to affect the view of the community as external parties and are evidence of genuine image problems influenced by internal and external factors from Plaza Hotel Semarang as well as explanations of previous and current conditions.

Plaza Hotel Semarang uses conventional and modern communication styles as a way to survive looking for potential customers. Many activities in the social environment are considered to be opportunities for Plaza Hotel Semarang to launch its rebranding action.

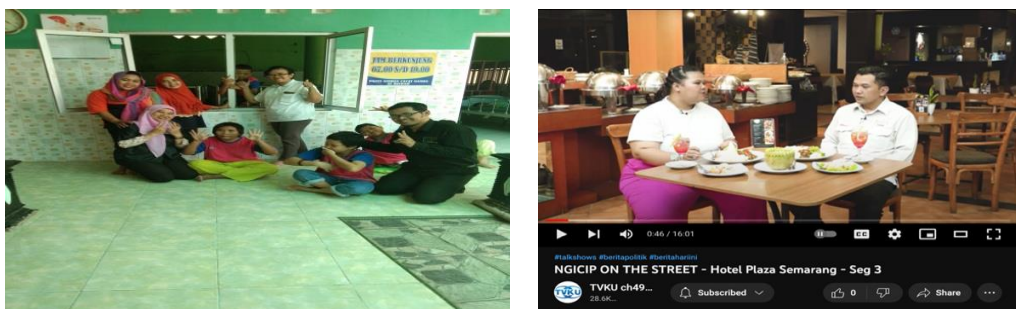


Figure 5. Plaza hotel public relations activities

The manifestation of the rebranding action launched is through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities, hotel reviews, radio guests, hotel expos, and wedding expos. Plaza Hotel Semarang uses the "pick up the ball" technique as its marketing strategy, which is still influential today. Plaza Hotel Semarang has begun to switch to using technology as its preferred promotional media. These technologies include TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and many others.

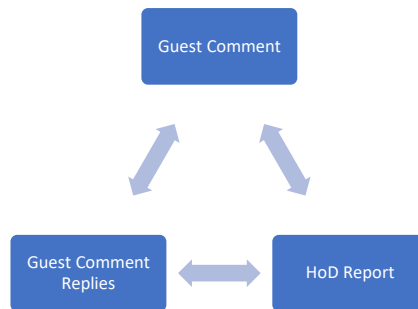


Figure 6. Evaluation process of plaza hotel

Plaza Hotel Semarang seeks this method as a tip for improving image of the hotel, which also refers to the services provided. With the guest comment, Plaza Hotel Semarang feels forged again to continue improving both the hotel's image, service, and management aspects to be even better. Plaza Hotels has made several strategic efforts to create and maintain a positive image precisely and continuously. The strategy is known by the activities that have been carried out through:

1. Join the Semarang wedding organizer community.
2. Participate in various wedding expo events in Semarang.
3. Sales visit by introducing Plaza Hotel as a convention hotel.
4. Conducting CSR activities in various places in the city of Semarang.
5. Establish relations with mass media in the city of Semarang.
6. Provide a place to be lent to the media for shooting as a promotional measure.

Based on the data above, it is known that the efforts made by Plaza Hotel in realizing the restoration of the hotel's image will go in a more positive direction. Through the above efforts, Plaza Hotels, in addition to spending money on promotional activities, will also get a positive impact in the form of publications whose results will increase the number of relationships and the level of positive influence for Plaza Hotels in the future.

5. Conclusion

With those strategies, Plaza Hotel expects a shift in the primary set of people to see the Plaza Hotel with a new, more positive image. Strategy design that continues to develop can be adjusted to the latest conditions in the community. Using a priority system can be a solution to forming the right public relations strategy. Some efforts that can be done in a short time include:

Recruit extraordinary employees for the marketing communication department as soon as possible in order to help implement the rebranding strategy through social media faster, design a new logo and exterior of the building that is fresher and do a rebranding as soon

as possible, multiply branding through social media (Tik Tok, IG, Facebook, Paid Promote, press), improve quality of the service to get more positive review from the guest, Make a new credo for staff service value, create an iconic figure.

CREDIT AUTHORSHIP CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Author1, 4, 5: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing.

Author 2, 3: Public Relations, Review, Validation.

DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

REFERENCES

- [1] H. Mujiyanto, "Pengaruh strategi public relations terhadap citra perusahaan (studi kasus pada hotel grand kopo bandung)," *J. Komun. Has. Pemikir. dan Penelit.*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 88–96, 2018.
- [2] M. R. D. Wela, "Analisis Pemanfaatan Cyber Public Relation Aveta Hotel Malioboro dalam Upaya Mempertahankan Citra Selama Masa Pandemi Covid-19 Tahun 2021," Universitas Mercu Buana Yogyakarta, 2021.
- [3] I. I. Nasution, "Peranan Public Relations Dalam Meningkatkan Pelayanan Informasi Hotel Garuda Plaza," *J. War. Ed.* 61, vol. 13, no. 3, pp. 138–149, 2019.
- [4] Azalia Agnes Wulandari, R. Wisudawanto, and Musta' an, "Strategi public relations kusuma sahid prince hotel solo dalam membentuk citra ditengah pandemi COVID 19," *KOMUNITAS J. Ilmu Komun.*, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 42–46, 2022, [Online]. Available: www.aging-us.com
- [5] D. Mairita, "Marketing Public Relations Dalam Membangun Citra Hotel Furaya Pekanbaru," *J. Ekon. Sos. Hum.*, vol. 3, no. 12, pp. 35–42, 2022, [Online]. Available: <https://jurnalintelektiva.com/index.php/jurnal/article/view/805>
- [6] J. A. Irawan, A. K. Ramdhani, and I. U. A. Asshofi, "Analisis Kualifikasi Dasar Kemampuan Kepemimpinan Dalam Rekrutmen Karyawan Bidang Industri Pariwisata," *Mubha J.*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 30–40, 2022.
- [7] S. L. Lengkong, M. Sondakh, and J. W. Londa, "Strategi Public Relations Dalam Pemulihan Citra Perusahaan (Studi Kasus Rumah Makan Kawan Baru Megamas Manado)," *Acta Diurna*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 1–11, 2017.
- [8] G. A. Syahrani, "Strategi Branding Hotel Grand Dafam Rohan Sebagai Hotel Syariah 'Bintang 4' Di Yogyakarta," *Lekt. J. Ilmu Komun.*, vol. 2, no. 5, pp. 481–490, 2019, [Online]. Available: <https://journal.student.uny.ac.id/index.php/ilkom/article/view/16379%0Ahttps://journal.student.uny.ac.id/index.php/ilkom/article/download/16379/15849>
- [9] A. G. Subakti, "Hotel dan Sejarahnya," *Binus university hospitality article*, 2016. <https://hotel-management.binus.ac.id/2016/08/01/hotel-dan-sejarahnya/> (accessed Dec. 10, 2013).
- [10] M. F. Achmad, "Peran Housekeeping Dalam Usaha Meningkatkan Kepuasan Tamu Di Hotel," *J. Ilm. Kepariwisata*, 2018.
- [11] I. Silviani, *Public Relations Sebagai Solusi Komunikasi Krisis*. Surabaya: Scopindo Media Pustaka, 2020.
- [12] Cutlip and Center, *Effective Public Relations*, 9th ed. Jakarta: Kencana, 2006.
- [13] L. S. Natasha, O. B. Wahyudi, and A. Yogatama, "Proses Public Relations Dalam Pembentukan

- Citra Pada Reopening Hotel Majapahit By MGallery," *J. E-Komunikasi*, vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 1–11, 2021.
- [14] P. Ruliana and R. Dwiantari, "Strategi Public Relations Hotel dalam Membentuk Citra Objek Wisata," *J. ASPIKOM*, vol. 2, no. 4, pp. 255–271, 2015, doi: 10.24329/aspikom.v2i4.76.
- [15] R. O. Bagus, "Strategi Humas Dalam Meningkatkan Citra Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Intan Lampung," UIN Raden Intan Lampung, 2019.
- [16] M. Riadi, "Citra Perusahaan (Pengertian, Fungsi, Jenis, Indikator dan Strategi Pembentukan)," *Kajian Pustaka*, 2020. <https://www.kajianpustaka.com/2020/10/citra-perusahaan.html> (accessed Dec. 10, 2023).
- [17] N. Amalia, "Pengaruh Citra Merek, Harga Dan Kualitas Produk Terhadap Keputusan Pembelian (Studi Kasus Pada Konsumen Mie Endess Di Bangkalan)," *J. Stud. Manaj. dan Bisnis*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 96–104, Dec. 2019, doi: 10.21107/jsmb.v6i2.6688.
- [18] Seftiani, "Pengaruh Citra Perusahaan dan Atribut Produk Terhadap Minat Menabung Nasabah Dalam Perspektif Islam (Studi Pada Nasabah Bank Syariah Mandiri KC. Teluk Betung Bandar Lampung)," UIN Raden Intan Lampung, 2017.
- [19] J. A. Irawan, D. J. Purnomo, and S. A. Septemuryantoro, "Pembekalan Keahlian Digital Marketing Berbasis 'Bas' Bagi Pengelola Kampung Dolanan Temanggung," *SEMESTA*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 54–61, 2022.
- [20] R. Y. Hayuningtyas and R. Sari, "ANALISIS SENTIMEN OPINI PUBLIK BAHASA INDONESIA TERHADAP WISATA TMII MENGGUNAKAN NAÏVE BAYES DAN PSO," *J. Techno Nusa Mandiri*, vol. 16, no. 1, pp. 37–42, Mar. 2019, doi: 10.33480/techno.v16i1.115.
- [21] P. Aditya, Syaharuddin, Rochgiyanti, F. Mardiani, and M. Prawitasari, "Jejak kebangkitan pers kota Banjarmasin pasca 1998," *J. Publ. Berk. Pendidik. ilmu Sos.*, pp. 52–64, 2022.
- [22] S. Arikunto, *Prosedur Penelitian Suatu Pendekatan Praktik*. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.
- [23] Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D*. Bandung: Alfabeta, 2019.
- [24] R. A. Fadhallah, *Wawancara*. Jakarta: UNJ Press, 2021. [Online]. Available: <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=rN4fEAAAQBAJ>
- [25] Y. A. Azis, "Studi Pustaka: Pengertian, Tujuan, Sumber dan Metode," *Deepublish Store*, 2023. <https://deepublishstore.com/blog/studi-pustaka/> (accessed Dec. 11, 2023).
- [26] R. M. Pradistya, "Teknik Triangulasi dalam Pengolahan Data Kualitatif," *DQLab*, 2021. <https://dqlab.id/teknik-triangulasi-dalam-pengolahan-data-kualitatif> (accessed Dec. 11, 2023).
- [27] S. M. Rezkia, "Langkah-Langkah Menggunakan Teknik Analisis Data Kualitatif," *DQLab*, 2020. <https://dqlab.id/data-analisis-pahami-teknik-pengumpulan-data> (accessed Dec. 11, 2023).
- [28] O. A. Cahyanto, "Interview: Plaza Hotel Semarang," 2022.
- [29] A. N. Firdaus, "Interview: Plaza Hotel Semarang," 2022.
- [30] M. Y. Sari, "Interview: Plaza Hotel Semarang," 2022.