JUMORA: JURNAL MODERASI OLAHRAGA
E-ISSN: 2797-8761
Volume 6, No. 2, December 2026
DOI: 10.53863/mor.v6i2.2323
Universitas Ma'arif Nahdlatul Ulama Kebumen

Original Article Research

The Influence of Social Media on Community Interest in Participating Padel Sports in Malang City

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Received: 04/06/2026 Revised: 28/07/2026 Accepted: 11/11/2026

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Abstract

Padel is one of the fastest-growing sports worldwide and has recently gained increasing popularity in Indonesia. The rapid development of padel is closely associated with the widespread use of social media as a platform for information dissemination and sports promotion. This study examined how social media influences community interest in participating in padel sports in Malang City. A quantitative research design with a survey approach was employed. The study included 65 respondents selected using purposive sampling. Data were collected through questionnaires measuring social media exposure and interest in participating in padel sports. The instruments were tested for validity and reliability prior to data analysis. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, validity and reliability tests, normality tests, simple linear regression, t-tests, F-tests, and coefficient of determination analysis. The results indicated that social media had a significant positive effect on community interest in participating in padel sports ($t = 30.318$; $p < 0.05$). Furthermore, the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.936$) showed that social media explained 93.6% of the variance in community interest in padel participation. These findings suggest that social media plays a crucial role in increasing public awareness, attraction, and participation in emerging sports such as padel. The study contributes to understanding the role of digital communication in promoting sports participation and provides practical implications for sports organizations and padel communities.

Keywords: community participation, padel sport, physical activity, social media, sport promotion

How to cite:

Fadilla, F., Artanty, ary, Rohmah, L. N., Lufthansa, L., Yahya, A., Budiono, D., Ramadhana, R. (2026). The Influence of Social Media On Community Interest in Participating Padel Sports in Malang City. *Jurnal Moderasi Olahraga*, *6*(2), 289–302. https://doi.org/10.53863/mor.v6i2.2323

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1. INTRODUCTION

Growing public awareness of the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle has led to increased participation in physical activity and recreational sports (Bull et al., 2020; Chaput et al., 2020; Guthold et al., 2020). Beyond improving physical fitness, contemporary sports are increasingly recognized as platforms for social interaction, leisure, and lifestyle expression, particularly among urban populations seeking enjoyable and community-oriented recreational activities (Eime et al., 2023). This development has encouraged the emergence of various new sports that combine health benefits with social engagement.

Padel is a racket-based sport played primarily in doubles on an enclosed court surrounded by glass walls. By integrating characteristics of both tennis and squash, the sport offers a relatively simple playing format that is accessible to participants across different ages and skill levels (Playtommic & Network, 2026). The sport is recognized for its accessibility, relatively simple rules, and social nature, making it attractive to participants of various ages and skill levels (Martín-miguel et al., 2025; Xiao et al., 2025). Recent reports indicate that padel has become one of the fastest-growing sports globally, with more than 30 million active players across nearly 150 countries (Playtommic & Network, 2026). As a result, padel has grown rapidly internationally, with participation expanding across numerous countries (Lauxtermann & Stubbs, 2025).

Padel growth has also been observed in Indonesia. Over the last few years, the number of padel courts and clubs has increased substantially (Sedky et al., 2022). Statistical data show that Indonesia grew from only a few padel facilities in 2021 to hundreds of clubs and courts by 2025 (Conde-Ripoll et al., 2024). This trend suggests that padel is increasingly recognized as an attractive recreational sport that aligns with contemporary lifestyle preferences. Beyond its physical benefits, padel offers opportunities for social interaction and community engagement, which contribute to its growing popularity (Lauxtermann & Stubbs, 2025).

Alongside the growth of emerging sports, advances in digital technology have transformed how people access information and engage with sports-related content (Balsalobre-fernández et al., 2017; Conde-Ripoll et al., 2024). Social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and X have become essential channels for communication, information sharing, and community building (Abeza, 2023). Through visual and interactive content, social media enables sports organizations, athletes, influencers, and recreational communities to reach wider audiences and promote sports participation effectively (Eime et al., 2023; Filo et al., 2014; Sophia Lazarou et al., 2026). As a result, social media has become an influential factor in shaping attitudes, perceptions, and behavioral intentions toward sports participation (Rai et al., 2025; Zhuka et al., 2025).

Previous studies consistently demonstrate that social media positively influences sports participation. Social media use positively influences exercise behavior through intrinsic motivation and behavioral intention (Xiao et al., 2025). López-Carril et al. (2025) found that digital platforms facilitate sports participation by expanding access to sports information and fostering online communities. Zhong et al. (2025) further showed that digital sports content improves participation by enhancing sports cognition and self-efficacy.

Despite padel's growing popularity, research on factors influencing community interest in participating in this sport remains limited, particularly in Indonesia. Existing studies

primarily focus on padel performance, health benefits, and industry (Conde-Ripoll et al., 2024; Lauxtermann & Stubbs, 2025; Martín-miguel et al., 2025). Empirical evidence on how social media influences public interest in padel participation remains scarce (Ratulie & Yoedtadi, 2026). This gap highlights the need for further investigation regarding the role of social media in promoting emerging sports within local contexts (Sophia Lazarou et al., 2026).

Therefore, this study aims to analyze how social media influences community interest in participating in padel sports in Malang City. The findings are expected to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on sports participation and digital communication while providing practical insights for sports organizations, padel communities, and policymakers seeking to expand public engagement in emerging sports.

2. METHOD

2.1 Participants

This study involved 65 respondents residing in Malang City. Participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique based on predetermined criteria, including: (1) being at least 17 years old, (2) actively using social media, and (3) having knowledge of padel as a sport. The respondents consisted of 29 males (44.6%) and 36 females (55.4%). Based on age distribution, 10 respondents

(15.4%) were aged 17–22 years, 12 respondents (18.5%) were aged 23–28 years, 18 respondents

(27.7%) were aged 29–34 years, and 25 respondents (38.4%) were over 34 years old. These participants were community members who had been exposed to information about padel through various social media platforms.

2.2 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research approach with a survey design. The survey method was chosen because it enables researchers to collect information regarding respondents' perceptions, attitudes, and interests toward a particular phenomenon. The study aimed to examine the influence of social media (independent variable) on community interest in participating in padel sports (dependent variable).

The research model used a simple linear regression design, where social media (X) was hypothesized to influence interest in participating in padel sports (Y). Data were collected at a single point in time using an online questionnaire distributed through Google Forms.

2.3 Instruments

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of two variables: social media and interest in participating in padel sports. The questionnaire was developed from relevant theoretical constructs and previous studies, following recommended procedures for scale development and validation in behavioral research (Boateng et al., 2018).

The social media variable consisted of 15 items developed based on indicators of social media exposure, frequency of access, content engagement, interaction, and trust in sports-related information. Meanwhile, the interest in participating in padel sports variable consisted of 15 items measuring respondents' attention, attraction, willingness to participate,

intention to join communities, and intention to engage in padel activities regularly. All questionnaire items used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Table 1.

Operational Definition of Variables

Variable	Indicators	Number of Items
Social Media (X)	Intensity of use, exposure to padel content, Interaction with content, trust in information	15
Interest in Padel Participation (Y)	Attention, attraction, willingness to participate, intention to join communities, sustained participation	15

Instrument validity was assessed using the Pearson Product Moment correlation test. An item was considered valid if the correlation coefficient exceeded the critical value (r-table = 0.244). Instrument reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, with a minimum acceptable value of 0.70 (Jr. et al., 2022).

2.4 Procedures

This research was conducted through several stages. First, the researchers developed and validated the questionnaire instruments based on relevant theoretical frameworks and previous studies concerning social media and sports participation. Second, the researchers distributed the questionnaire online through Google Forms to respondents who met the inclusion criteria.

Third, respondents completed the questionnaire voluntarily after receiving information about the study's purpose. Fourth, the collected data were screened and coded before being entered into the statistical analysis software. Finally, the data were analyzed to determine the relationship between social media and community interest in participating in padel sports.

The Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Sports Sciences, University Insan Budi Utomo, Malang, Indonesia, approved this study under Ethical Clearance Number: 0880/UIBU/Q.3/.VI/2026. All participants voluntarily agreed to participate in this study and provided informed consent before completing the questionnaire.

2.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize respondent characteristics and variable distributions. Instrument quality was evaluated through validity and reliability testing. The normality of the data distribution was examined using the Shapiro–Wilk test.

To test the research hypothesis, simple linear regression analysis was employed. The significance of the regression model was assessed using the F-test (ANOVA), while the significance of the independent variable was evaluated using the t-test. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was calculated to determine the proportion of variance in community interest in participating in padel sports explained by social media exposure. Statistical significance was determined at the 0.05 level.

3. RESULTS

The results are presented in the following order: respondent characteristics, instrument validity and reliability, descriptive statistics, normality testing, and simple linear regression analysis to examine the influence of social media on community interest in participating in padel sports.

3.1. Respondent Characteristics

A total of 65 respondents participated in this study. Respondents consisted of 29 males (44.6%) and 36 females (55.4%). By age distribution, most respondents were over 34 years old (38.4%), followed by those aged 29–34 years (27.7%), 23–28 years (18.5%), and 17–22 years (15.4%).

Table 2.

Respondent Characteristics

Characteristics	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	29	44.6
Female	36	55.4
Total	**65**	**100.0**
Age		
17-22 years	10	15.4
23-28 years	12	18.5
29-34 years	18	27.7
>34 years	25	38.4
Total	**65**	**100.0**

A total of 65 respondents participated in this study, representing a diverse demographic profile in terms of gender and age. The sample included both male and female participants, with a relatively balanced gender distribution, allowing the perspectives of both groups to be adequately represented. In terms of age, respondents were drawn from four age categories, indicating that the study captured views from young adults to older adults. Including participants across different demographic groups enhances the sample's representativeness and provides a broader understanding of community interest in participating in padel sports. A detailed summary of the respondents' demographic characteristics is presented in Table 2

3.2. Validity Test

The validity test was conducted using Pearson Product Moment correlation. The critical r-table value for 65 respondents at a significance level of 0.05 was 0.244. An item was considered valid when the correlation coefficient exceeded the critical value.

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Table 3.

Validity Test of Social Media Variable

Item	r-value	r-table	Description
X1	0.598	0.244	Valid
X2	0.598	0.244	Valid
X3	0.598	0.244	Valid
X4	0.493	0.244	Valid
X5	0.597	0.244	Valid
X6	0.753	0.244	Valid
X7	0.786	0.244	Valid
X8	0.831	0.244	Valid
X9	0.776	0.244	Valid
X10	0.810	0.244	Valid
X11	0.772	0.244	Valid
X12	0.693	0.244	Valid
X13	0.845	0.244	Valid
X14	0.889	0.244	Valid
X15	0.753	0.244	Valid

The validity of the social media instrument was evaluated using the Pearson Product-Moment correlation test. The analysis indicated that all questionnaire items satisfied the predetermined validity criterion, as each item produced a correlation coefficient exceeding the critical value. These findings show that each indicator correlated sufficiently with the measured construct and was therefore appropriate for inclusion in subsequent analyses. The detailed results of the validity assessment for each questionnaire item are presented in Table 3.

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Table 4.

Validity Test of Interest in Padel Participation Variable

Item	r-value	r-table	Description
Y1	0.338	0.244	Valid
Y2	0.474	0.244	Valid
Y3	0.718	0.244	Valid
Y4	0.637	0.244	Valid
Y5	0.657	0.244	Valid
Y6	0.811	0.244	Valid
Y7	0.765	0.244	Valid
Y8	0.790	0.244	Valid
Y9	0.821	0.244	Valid
Y10	0.835	0.244	Valid
Y11	0.821	0.244	Valid
Y12	0.755	0.244	Valid
Y13	0.742	0.244	Valid
Y14	0.858	0.244	Valid
Y15	0.851	0.244	Valid

The validity of the instrument measuring interest in padel sport participation was examined using the Pearson Product-Moment correlation test. The analysis demonstrated that all questionnaire items fulfilled the established validity criterion, indicating that each item adequately represented the construct being measured. Consequently, the entire set of indicators was considered appropriate for subsequent statistical analyses. A detailed summary of the validity test results is presented in Table 4.

3.3. Reliability Test

The reliability test was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient.

Table 5.

Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Description
Social Media	0.947	Highly Reliable
Interest in Padel Participation	0.949	Highly Reliable

The internal consistency of the research instrument was evaluated using Cronbach's

Alpha coefficient. The reliability analysis confirmed that both measurement scales showed high internal consistency, indicating that the questionnaire items consistently measured their respective constructs. Therefore, the instruments were sufficiently reliable for the subsequent statistical analyses. The detailed reliability coefficients for each variable are presented in Table 5.

3.4. Descriptive Statistics

Table 6.

Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Category
Social Media	66.57	High
Interest in Padel Participation	67.40	High

The descriptive analysis indicates that respondents generally reported favorable perceptions of social media and a strong interest in participating in padel sports. These findings suggest that social media has become an important source of sport-related information and engagement among the respondents, while interest in padel participation was consistently observed across the study sample. The descriptive statistics for each research variable are summarized in Table 6.

3.5. Normality Test

Table 7.

The normality test was conducted using the Shapiro–Wilk test.

Variable	Significance
Social Media	0.000
Interest in Padel Participation	0.000

The normality of the study variables was assessed using the Shapiro–Wilk test. The results indicated that the distributions deviated from normality, as reflected by significance values below the established threshold. Nevertheless, linear regression analysis was retained because the method is generally considered robust to moderate departures from normality, particularly when the sample size is adequate, and the analysis focuses on estimating the relationship between variables. The detailed results of the normality test are presented in Table 7.

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3.6. Regression Analysis

Table 8.

Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square
0.968	0.936	0.935

The regression model demonstrated substantial explanatory power, indicating that social media accounted for a large proportion of the variability in community interest in participating in padel sports. This finding suggests that social media represents an important factor associated with individuals' interest in engaging in the sport. The detailed model summary is presented in Table 8.

Table 9.

ANOVA Results

Source	F	Sig.
Regression	919.208	0.000

The ANOVA results further confirmed that the regression model was statistically significant, indicating that the proposed model meaningfully explained the relationship between social media and community interest in padel participation. The complete results are shown in Table 9.

Table 10.

Regression Coefficients

Variable	B	t	Sig.
Constant	4.266	2.003	0.049
Social Media	0.949	30.318	0.000

The regression coefficient analysis revealed a positive and statistically significant association between social media and community interest in participating in padel sports. This finding indicates that greater social media engagement was associated with higher interest in participating in padel. The estimated regression coefficients are presented in Table 10.

The results indicate that social media had a positive and significant effect on community interest in participating in padel sports. The significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$) confirms that the proposed hypothesis was accepted.

4. DISCUSSIONS

The findings indicate that social media has a positive and significant influence on community interest in participating in padel sports in Malang City. The regression analysis showed a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), indicating that social media significantly contributes to increasing public interest in participating in padel sports. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.936 demonstrates that social media accounts for 93.6% of the variance in participation interest. This finding suggests that social media has become a

dominant factor in shaping public awareness, attraction, and intention to engage in emerging sports such as padel.

The significant influence of social media on sports participation can be explained by its role as a channel for information dissemination and social interaction. Social media allows individuals to access sports-related information quickly and continuously through visual content, short videos, promotional materials, and user-generated experiences (López-Carril et al., 2025; Verónica et al., 2024). Exposure to such content increases awareness and curiosity, which eventually leads to behavioral intentions (Tian et al., 2023). In the context of padel, social media gives individuals opportunities to learn about the sport, understand its rules, watch gameplay, and discover local facilities and communities. Consequently, individuals become more motivated to participate in the sport (Ajzen, 2020).

The results support findings that social media positively affects exercise behavior through intrinsic motivation and exercise intention (Xiao et al., 2025). Individuals who are frequently exposed to sports-related content tend to develop stronger intentions to engage in physical activities (Eather et al., 2023; Martín-miguel et al., 2025). López-Carril et al. (2025) emphasized that social media serves as an effective medium for increasing sports participation by creating digital communities and facilitating access to sports information. The current findings reinforce the argument that social media is not merely a communication platform but also a behavioral influence mechanism that encourages sports engagement.

Another possible explanation for the strong influence observed in this study relates to padel's characteristics. Padel is widely recognized as an accessible, socially oriented sport that people of different skill levels can play (Martín-miguel et al., 2025). Unlike some competitive sports that require extensive technical skills, padel offers a relatively easy learning process and emphasizes enjoyment and social interaction. According, padel contributes to psychological well-being, social connectedness, and enjoyment, making it attractive to a broad range of participants (Lauxtermann & Stubbs, 2025). Therefore, when social media introduces padel through entertaining, engaging content, individuals may see the sport as approachable and enjoyable, increasing their willingness to participate.

Padel's rapid growth in Indonesia further strengthens social media's influence. The expansion of padel courts, clubs, and communities has been accompanied by extensive digital promotion across platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. Social media content frequently features matches, training sessions, celebrity participation, and lifestyle-oriented representations of padel (Abeza, 2023; Rai et al., 2025). This exposure helps build positive perceptions and social acceptance of the sport. Social media has become a medium through which sports trends become lifestyle symbols and social identities, particularly among urban communities (Ratulie & Yoedtadi, 2026).

The findings may also be interpreted through Rogers' Diffusion of Innovation Theory, which explains how new ideas and innovations spread through communication channels within a social system. In this study, social media serves as the primary communication channel through which information about padel is shared with potential participants. Repeated exposure to padel-related content accelerates awareness, interest, evaluation, and eventual adoption of the sport (Lauxtermann & Stubbs, 2025; López-Carril et al., 2025; Zhong et al., 2025). Consequently, social media plays a critical role in spreading padel as a relatively new sport in Indonesia.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that sports organizations, padel communities, and facility providers should optimize social media as a promotional and engagement tool. Creating attractive digital content, collaborating with influencers, and strengthening online communities may increase public awareness and encourage greater participation in padel activities. These strategies could support the sustainable development of padel in Indonesia and contribute to broader efforts to increase physical activity participation among the population.

Despite the significant findings, this study has several limitations. First, the sample was limited to respondents in Malang City, which may restrict the generalizability of the results to other regions. Second, the study focused solely on social media as an explanatory variable, while other factors such as accessibility of facilities, economic conditions, peer influence, and personal motivation were not examined. Future studies are recommended to include larger and more diverse samples as well as additional variables to provide a more comprehensive understanding of factors influencing participation in padel sports.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This study demonstrates that social media has a positive and significant influence on community interest in participating in padel sports in Malang City. The findings indicate that increased exposure to sports-related content through social media enhances public awareness, attraction, and intention to participate in padel, with social media explaining 93.6% of the variance in participation interest. These results highlight the important role of digital communication as an effective medium for promoting emerging sports and fostering community engagement. This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on digital communication and sports participation, particularly in the context of emerging sports in Indonesia, and offers practical implications for sports organizations, padel communities, and policymakers to optimize social media strategies to increase public participation. Nevertheless, interpret the findings with caution because the study was limited to respondents from Malang City and examined only social media as the independent variable. Future research is therefore recommended to involve larger and more diverse samples and to examine additional determinants, such as facility accessibility, economic factors, peer influence, and personal motivation, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of community participation in padel sports.

Acknowledgment

The authors thank everyone who generously shared their time and perspectives, contributing to the study's successful completion. The authors also thank colleagues and institutions that supported the research process. Their contributions were invaluable to the study's successful completion.

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