

THE CONSUMER PERCEPTIONS OF DIGITAL MARKETING FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS IN KENDARI CITY



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To cite this article:

Taufiq, D. M., Surni, S., & Abdullah, W. G. (2025). The Consumer Perceptions of Digital Marketing for Agricultural Products in Kendari City. *International Journal of Agricultural Social Economics and Rural Development (Ijaserd)*, 4(2), 112–116. <https://doi.org/10.37149/ijaserd.v4i2.1905>

Received: March 18, 2025; **Accepted:** March 30, 2025; **Published:** March 31, 2025

ABSTRACT

Digital marketing has grown rapidly as an integral part of marketing strategies in the digitalization era, and the agricultural sector is no exception. However, studies on consumer perceptions of agricultural products towards the application of digital marketing, especially in the Kendari area, are still limited. This study aimed to determine consumers' perceptions of agricultural products towards digital marketing in Kendari City. The research was conducted from January to March 2024, involving 70 respondents who are consumers of agricultural products in Kendari City. The research variables included Search Engine Marketing, Pay Per Click, Email Marketing, Content Marketing, Social Media Marketing, and Affiliate Marketing. Data collection used a questionnaire with a Likert scale, while data analysis was carried out using descriptive statistical methods. The results showed that overall, consumer perceptions of digital marketing for agricultural products in Kendari City had a mean value of 4.00 (good category), with the highest mean value in Social Media Marketing (4.32) followed by Search Engine Marketing (4.33), Content Marketing (4.31), Affiliate Marketing (3.91), Pay Per Click (3.63), and the lowest Email Marketing (3.51). These findings illustrate that digital marketing is highly relevant to consumers of agricultural products, but not all digital marketing strategies are perceived optimally by consumers.

Keywords: affiliate; content; digital; email; social media.

INTRODUCTION

The development of information technology has changed the way of looking at various economic activities, including the marketing of agricultural products. Digital marketing is now considered an effective strategy to increase sales and competitiveness of agricultural products (Nurhayati & Murwani, 2018). Some previous studies, such as Yadav & Rahman (2017), Aji et al. (2020), and Molina-Prados et al. (2021), revealed that digital marketing can increase purchase intentions. However, specific research on consumer perceptions of agricultural products towards digital marketing is still minimal, especially in Kendari City.

Digital marketing has a significant impact on consumers' perception of agricultural products. Agricultural producers can increase consumer trust, satisfaction, and purchase intent by leveraging digital technology, social media, and customized marketing strategies. However, overcoming challenges such as consumer skepticism towards digitalization is crucial to maximizing the benefits of digital marketing in the agriculture sector.

Previous research has focused more on other industrial sectors, such as fashion, e-commerce, and services (Stephen, 2016; Erdogmus & Cicek, 2012; Wang & Herrando, 2019). This research arises because it is unclear to what extent consumers of agricultural products perceive digital marketing, especially in Kendari. This research seeks to fill the gap by examining consumer perceptions of six forms of digital marketing. The novelty of this research lies in the application of digital marketing in the agricultural sector, which is still rarely researched, especially in the local context of Kendari City.



This study aimed to determine consumers' perceptions of agricultural products towards digital marketing, including Search Engine Marketing, pay-per-click, Email Marketing, Content Marketing, Social Media Marketing, and Affiliate Marketing.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research was conducted in Kendari City from January to March 2024. The research population is consumers of agricultural products in Kendari City, with a sample of 70 respondents selected by purposive sampling, with the criteria that respondents have actively bought agricultural products online in the last six months.

The research variables include six aspects of digital marketing: Search Engine Marketing, Pay-per-click, Email Marketing, Content Marketing, Social Media Marketing, and Affiliate Marketing. Measurement is done through a questionnaire using a Likert scale (Strongly Agree-Strongly Disagree). Data analysis uses descriptive statistical methods to determine consumer perceptions as indicated by the average value of each variable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

The characteristics of the respondents in this study are described by age, education, and income level. These are summarized in Table 2 below, which contains the averages of each parameter to provide information on the general profile of the respondents involved in the study.

Table 1. Respondent characteristics

No.	Parameters	Unit	Average
1	Age	Year	31
2	Education	Year	16
3	Income	IDR/Month	3.135.714

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents in this study based on three primary parameters: age, education level, and income. The average age of respondents is 31 years old, indicating that most respondents belong to the productive age and belong to the millennial generation, who are generally quite familiar with digital technology. This is in line with research, which states that the 25-35 age group highly accepts digital innovation because they grew up in an era of technological development (Priporas, Stylos, & Fotiadis, 2017).

The average education of the respondents is 16 years, equivalent to an undergraduate college graduate. Higher education positively correlates with technology adoption because individuals with higher educational backgrounds tend to more easily understand and implement digital technology in their daily lives, including in consumption and marketing activities (Rogers, 2016; Hossain, Quaresma, & Rahman, 2019).

Furthermore, the average respondent income of IDR 3,135,714 per month illustrates that respondents belong to the middle economic group, so they tend to have sufficient purchasing power and access to technology and various digital marketing platforms. According to Kotler and Keller (2021), income levels play an important role in determining consumer behavior, especially in choosing marketing media and preferences for products purchased.

These demographic characteristics are relevant to the research objectives as they provide an overview of the general profile of consumers of agricultural products targeted by digital marketing in Kendari City. Understanding these characteristics is important to ensure the effectiveness of the digital marketing strategy used.

Consumer Perception of Agricultural Products towards Digital Marketing

The perceptions of consumers of agricultural products towards digital marketing in Kendari City are shown in detail in Table 1. This data illustrates the distribution of respondents' answers to six digital marketing indicators: Search Engine Marketing, Pay-per-click, Email Marketing, Content Marketing, Social Media Marketing, and Affiliate Marketing. The answer scale uses a Likert scale with the categories Strongly Agree (SS), Agree (S), Undecided (RR), Disagree (TS), and Strongly Disagree (STS). The average answer score represents the level of positive consumer perceptions of each indicator.

Table 2: Consumer perception of agricultural products towards digital marketing

Variables	Item	Answer Scale					Average
		SS	S	RR	TS	STS	
Search Engine Marketing	X1.1	37	33	0	0	0	4,53
	X1.2	30	40	0	0	0	4,43
	X1.3	19	38	10	3	0	4,04
Average Search Engine Marketing							4,33
Pay Per Click	X2.1	17	53	0	0	0	4,24
	X2.2	23	32	15	0	0	4,11
	X2.3	0	0	38	32	0	2,54
Average Pay Per Click							3,63
Email Marketing	X3.1	0	31	38	1	0	3,43
	X3.2	1	33	35	1	0	3,49
	X3.3	0	44	25	1	0	3,61
Email Marketing Average							3,51
Content Marketing	X4.1	23	47	0	0	0	4,33
	X4.2	22	48	0	0	0	4,31
	X4.3	23	46	0	1	0	4,30
Content Marketing Average							4,31
Social Media Marketing	X5.1	22	48	0	0	0	4,31
	X5.2	20	50	0	0	0	4,29
	X5.3	25	45	0	0	0	4,36
Average Social Media Marketing							4,32
Affiliate Marketing	X6.1	14	56	0	0	0	4,20
	X6.2	17	52	1	0	0	4,23
	X6.3	13	26	1	30	0	3,31
Average Affiliate Marketing							3,91
Digital Marketing Average							4,00

The results showed that overall, consumer perceptions of digital marketing for agricultural products in Kendari City had a mean value of 4.00 (good category). This indicates that most respondents have a positive perception of the utilization of digital marketing as a marketing strategy for agricultural products. This finding aligns with previous studies' results, which state that public acceptance of digital marketing is increasing along with wider internet penetration and digital devices (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Lies, 2019).

Furthermore, of the six digital marketing indicators studied, the indicator that received the highest perception score was Search Engine Marketing, with an average of 4.33. and Social Media Marketing, with an average of 4.32. And Content Marketing with an average of 4.31. This indicates that these three strategies are considered most effective by consumers due to their ability to attract attention, present relevant information, and provide easy access to agricultural products online. This aligns with previous findings by Alalwan et al. (2017) that marketing strategies through search engines and social media can form strong consumer interactions and increase customer loyalty and trust.

Meanwhile, the Affiliate Marketing indicator has an average value of 3.91, Pay Per Click of 3.63, and Email Marketing of 3.51, which is quite good but relatively lower than the previous indicator. This is due to the lack of consumer understanding of the benefits and mechanisms of affiliate marketing strategies and the low relevance of paid advertising content (Pay-per-click) that appears automatically on digital platforms. This research is consistent with the opinion of Tiago and Veríssimo (2014), which states that email marketing and click-based advertising tend to be considered annoying if they are not targeted or personalized.

In general, these findings confirm that using more personalized and content-based digital marketing strategies relevant to consumer needs will be more effective in increasing positive consumer perceptions, especially in the context of agricultural products. Therefore, agribusiness actors need to pay more attention to optimizing digital marketing strategies, especially search engines, social media, and content marketing, which have been proven to get the highest positive responses from consumers.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analysis and research results, it can be concluded that consumers' perception of agricultural products towards digital marketing in Kendari City is overall good, with social media marketing and search engine marketing being the most positively received strategies. In contrast, Email Marketing and pay-per-click need to be increased in effectiveness to make them more relevant to consumers. This study contributes a picture of consumer perceptions that can be used to develop more effective digital marketing strategies for agricultural products in Kendari City. The recommendation for further research is developing a model that integrates the optimal types of digital marketing based on consumer characteristics in different regions.

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