

OPTIMIZING DIGITAL MARKETING TO INCREASE SALES OF MICRO-BUSINESSES IN THE CULINARY SECTOR IN GORONTALO CITY

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Abstract: This study aims to determine the effect of Digital Marketing utilization on the sales level of Micro Businesses in the Culinary Sector in Gorontalo City. This study uses a quantitative research method, and the data used are the results of questionnaires from 96 MSME respondents. The data analysis used in this study is simple linear regression. The results of the study indicate that the use of digital marketing has a positive and significant effect on increasing sales. These findings indicate that the more optimally businesses use digital marketing, the more they are able to boost sales. In addition, this study also confirms that most of the variation in sales growth can be explained by the use of digital marketing, while the rest is influenced by other factors that are not the focus of this study.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Micro Business, Sales

INTRODUCTION

MSMEs play a significant role in Indonesia's economic growth, accounting for 99% of all business units. Their contribution to GDP reaches 60.5%, and their employment absorption reaches 96.9% of the total national workforce (Ibrahim, 2024). Throughout the journey of this micro-enterprise, a marketing system is inextricably linked. Based on the Theory of Marketing, which serves as the primary reference for this research, this study utilizes Marketing theory as its basis. Marketing is the process by which companies create value for customers and build strong customer relationships to capture value from customers in return. In carrying out marketing activities, companies must employ an appropriate marketing strategy to optimally achieve all company goals. Marketing strategies not only play a role in driving sales but also in increasing customer satisfaction. Therefore, companies must provide customer satisfaction to gain a positive impression or response from customers. Companies must be fully responsible for the satisfaction of the products and services offered, as well as creating a comfortable store atmosphere for customers. Therefore, all company activities must be directed towards satisfying customers, ultimately aiming to generate profits (Kotler and Keller, 2012:29).

Development Micro Enterprises In Gorontalo City, the use of digital platforms also contributes to economic growth. The number of Micro Business Units in Gorontalo City is divided into several sectors including Kiosk Business, Joint, Craft, Service, Trade, Food Processing and Culinary. The number of micro businesses in the culinary sector recorded until 2024 is 2156 Micro Businesses. This certainly provides an illustration that the number of micro businesses in the culinary sector is currently growing very rapidly. The reason researchers chose Choosing micro businesses in the culinary sector for digital marketing analysis is very important because culinary is a basic need with a large market, in addition, digital marketing allows culinary MSMEs to reach more customers at a more efficient cost and build loyalty through more personal interactions. In addition, the culinary sector has great potential for growth because there are always innovations and market trends that can be adapted to digital marketing.

It is understandable that businesses employ various methods to increase sales, including digital marketing. The proliferation of technology has encouraged businesses to compete in product marketing. Digital marketing is considered an effective medium for increasing sales volume and achieving optimal profits. Sales promotion is the science and art of influencing individuals, encouraging sellers to buy the goods or services they offer. Sales promotion is the number of goods or services sold in an exchange process. (Basu Swatha: 2014).

Digital marketing is the use of the internet and other interactive technologies such as websites, search engine marketing, web banners, social networking, viral marketing, email marketing, and affiliate marketing. At a time when the effectiveness of traditional marketing is declining, new methods in the marketing world are experiencing significant growth (Putri & Marlien, 2022). In this study, digital marketing indicators were constructed including accessibility, interactivity, entertainment, trust, irritation, and informativeness. Furthermore, sales levels are an absolute requirement for a business's survival, as sales generate profits. The higher the sales, the greater the profits. (Mohammad Ahmadar & Perwito, 2021). In this study, the sales level indicator is constructed on Product Quality, Consumer Taste, Seller Ability, and Market Competition.

Various previous studies have discussed the role of digital marketing in the development of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) with diverse focuses and approaches. Research by Adya Utami Syukri and Andi Nonong Sunrawali (2022) used a descriptive analysis method and found that digital marketing has a positive impact on the development of MSMEs in Makassar City. Promotional media such as Instagram and distribution channels like Grab are the tools most widely used by MSMEs to increase profits, especially in the food and beverage sector. The similarity between this study and the current study lies in the focus of the study on digital marketing in MSME development. The difference lies in the research method, as the previous study used a descriptive approach, while this study uses a quantitative approach to measure the impact directly.

Furthermore, research by Rahmat Setiawan, Rizky Arnando Pratama, and Vicky F. Sanjaya (2021) used quantitative methods and showed that digital marketing had a positive and significant impact on increasing MSME profits in Tanggamus Regency. Similarities with this study lie in the quantitative approach and the use of digital marketing as the X variable. The difference lies in the Y variable, namely profit increase, while this study focuses on sales levels, particularly in the culinary sector.

Another study conducted by Kartini A. Sabanari (2024) also used quantitative methods to analyze the influence of digital marketing and sales promotions on customer purchase intention for Skintific products in TikTok Shop. The similarities between this study and the current study lie in the use of digital marketing variables and a quantitative approach, while the differences lie in the addition of the X2 variable, which is a sales promotion, and the Y variable, which measures purchase intention, not sales level. Meanwhile, research by Qurtub (2022) applied a systematic literature review method to 45 relevant publications. This study examined the global impact of digital marketing, frequently used strategy elements, and opportunities for future research. Similar to this study, it focuses on digital marketing, but differs in methodology. The previous study was a literature review, while this study uses quantitative empirical analysis to directly measure the impact.

Thus, the research position of The Influence of Digital Marketing Utilization on the Sales Level of Micro Businesses in the Culinary Sector in Gorontalo City has strong relevance to previous studies, but provides new contributions through the focus of the culinary sector, different research locations, and the Y variable in the form of sales levels, so that it can enrich the literature on the influence of digital marketing utilization on the micro business sector at the regional level.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a quantitative approach with a simple linear regression method to measure the influence of Digital Marketing variables on Sales Level. Data were collected through a questionnaire distributed to predetermined respondents. The questionnaire instrument was constructed using a Likert scale and tested for validity and reliability.

The stages of data analysis include validity testing, reliability testing, classical assumption testing, namely normality testing, and simple linear regression testing to determine the direction and magnitude of the influence of variable X on variable Y. The results of the analysis are displayed in the form of regression coefficient values, determination coefficients (R^2), and significance tests (t-tests) as a basis for drawing research conclusions.

RESEARCH RESULT

Research Instrument Testing

1) Validity and Reliability Test

Validity testing is conducted on each question item in the tested variable indicator. It is said to be valid if the calculated r value is $> r$ table, and vice versa, if the calculated r value is $< r$ table, it is invalid.

Table 1 Validity Test

No	Questionnaire Items	Rhitung	Rtable	Qualification
Utilization of Digital Marketing (X)				
1	Point 1	0.472617	0.1689	Valid
2	Point 2	0.6351	0.1689	Valid
3	Point 3	0.778306	0.1689	Valid
4	Point 4	0.817507	0.1689	Valid
5	Point 5	0.321027	0.1689	Valid
6	Point 6	0.788082	0.1689	Valid
7	Point 7	0.736711	0.1689	Valid
8	Point 8	0.571561	0.1689	Valid
9	Point 9	0.577296	0.1689	Valid
10	Point 10	0.738245	0.1689	Valid
Sales Rate (Y)				
1	Point 1	0.878081	0.1689	Valid
2	Point 2	0.881442	0.1689	Valid
3	Point 3	0.855738	0.1689	Valid
4	Point 4	0.958767	0.1689	Valid
5	Point 5	0.878661	0.1689	Valid
6	Point 6	0.878005	0.1689	Valid
7	Point 7	0.807229	0.1689	Valid
8	Point 8	0.829077	0.1689	Valid
9	Point 9	0.810653	0.1689	Valid
10	Point 10	0.878081	0.1689	Valid

Source: Data Processed in SPSS (2025)

Based on the results of the validity test on each questionnaire item, it was concluded that all questionnaire items were valid.

Table 2 Reliability Test

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.698	20

Source: Data Processed in SPSS (2025)

The value of Cronbach's Alpha of 0.698 indicates that the questionnaire for the Digital Marketing Monitoring Variable (X) and Sales Level (Y) whose reliability was tested has high reliability (reliability) because it is greater than 0.60.

2) Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Descriptive statistical analysis is a statistical technique used to analyze data by describing or depicting the collected data. This analysis aims to provide an overview or description of the data in terms of variables, as seen from the average (mean), minimum, maximum, and standard deviation values. Descriptive statistics are statistics used to describe data to provide clearer information.

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Utilization of Digital Marketing	96	28	50	42.46	4,321
Sales Level	96	37	50	45.03	4,608
Valid N (listwise)	96				

Source: Data Processed in SPSS (2025)

Based on the output results from SPSS 23.0 data, it is known that variable X (Utilization of Digital Marketing) has a minimum value of 28 and a maximum of 50. With an average value of 42.46 and a standard deviation of 4,312. The majority of respondents have a fairly consistent utilization of digital marketing and are close to the average value. The difference between respondents is not too large, indicating a relatively homogeneous perception or level of utilization. Variable Y (Sales Level) has a minimum value of 37 and a maximum of 50. With an average value of 45.03 and a standard deviation value of 4,564. The average sales level is quite high, which can reflect that the marketing strategy being implemented is quite effective. Although there are differences between respondents, in general, sales show positive results.

Table 4 Descriptive Statistics of Digital Marketing Utilization Variables

Indicator	Questionnaire Items	N	Min	Max	Mean	Criteria
Accessibility	X.1	96	2	5	4.67	Very good
	X.3	96	3	5	4.12	Good
Interactivity	X.2	96	3	5	4.26	Very good
Entertainment	X.4	96	3	5	4.53	Very good
	X.9	96	1	5	3.82	Very good
Trust	X.5	96	1	5	3.95	Very good
Aggravation	X.6	96	2	5	4.23	Very good
	X.7	96	3	5	4.30	Very good
Informative	X.8	96	2	5	4.35	Very good
	X.10	96	2	5	4.22	Very good

Source: Data Processed in SPSS (2025)

Based on the data above, it was found that all indicators in variable X were in the good and very good criteria. The results of descriptive statistical calculations found that the indicator with the highest mean value was the Accessibility indicator = 4.67. This is understandable. Accessibility indicators in digital marketing are crucial because they impact sales levels. Accessibility ensures everyone, including those with disabilities, can access and interact with digital content. By reaching more people, businesses can increase sales potential for micro-enterprises. With accessibility in digital marketing, micro-enterprises can improve sales sustainability, expand their market, and ultimately impact sales levels.

Table 5 Descriptive Statistics of Sales Level Variable

Indicator	Questionnaire Items	N	Min	Max	Mean	Criteria
Product Quality	Y.1	96	4	5	4.42	Very good
	Y.2	96	3	5	4.46	Very good
Consumer Taste	Y.3	96	3	5	4.53	Very good
	Y.4	96	4	5	4.49	Very good
Seller Ability	Y.5	96	4	5	4.50	Very good
	Y.6	96	2	5	4.44	Very good
	Y.7	96	3	5	4.57	Very good
Market Competition	Y.8	96	4	5	4.48	Very good
	Y.9	96	4	5	4.52	Very good
	Y.10	96	4	5	4.52	Very good

Source: Data Processed in SPSS (2025)

Based on the data above, it was found that all indicators in variable Y were in very good condition because all mean values were >4.21. The results of descriptive statistical calculations found that the indicator with the highest mean value was Sales Ability = 4.57. The sales ability indicator was constructed at point(1) marketing channels (2) marketing coverage (3) grouping (4) location and (5) inventory. In this case, Micro Businesses in the Culinary Sector are certainly capable of conducting effective marketing with a wide marketing reach influenced by digital marketing. In addition, the location of Micro Businesses in the Culinary Sector is also in a strategic position and is easy to reach and find for consumers, and always maintains inventory of the products sold.

3) Classical Assumption Test

The classical assumption test is a crucial step in linear regression analysis, ensuring that the constructed regression model meets certain statistical requirements, ensuring that the estimation results are valid and interpretable. The following are the results of the classical assumption test:

Normality Test

Table 6 Normality Test Results

Normality Test	Sig
<i>Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test</i>	0.102

Source: Data Processed in SPSS (2025)

Based on the data above, it can be seen that the significance value of the variable is 0.102, which means its significance value is greater than 0.05. Thus, based on this score, it can be said that the data distribution comes from a sample that is normally distributed.

Multiple Linear Regression Model

Table 7 Simple Linear Regression Model Test

Variables	B (Regression Coefficient)	Std. Error	t	Sig. (t)	Information
(Constant)	32,498	4,510	7,206	.000	-
<i>Digital Marketing</i>	.295	.106	2,793	.006	Significant

Source: Data Processed in SPSS (2025)

The equation $Y = 32,498 + 0.295x$ indicates a positive influence of the product on purchasing decisions. From the results of the equation, it can be explained as follows: first, the constant value of 32,498 means that if there is an influence of Digital Marketing Utilization on sales figures of 33,779. The Digital Marketing Utilization variable has a linear coefficient value of 0.295, meaning that for every 1 unit increase in the Digital Marketing Utilization variable, the Sales Level will increase by 0.295.

Statistical Hypothesis Testing Partial Test (t-Test)

Table 8 Partial Test Results (t-Test)

Variables	t	Sig. (t)	Information
(Constant)	7,206	.000	-
<i>Digital Marketing</i>	2,793	.006	Significant

Source: Data Processed in SPSS (2025)

From the results of the t-test show that the variable of digital marketing utilization has an effect on sales levels because it has a significance of $0.006 < 0.05$.

Coefficient of Determination Test

Table 9 Results of the Determination Coefficient Test

R	R Square (R2)	Adjusted R Square (Adj. R2)	Standard Error of the Estimate
.277a	.677	.667	4,451

Source: Data Processed in SPSS (2025)

Based on the R test table, the magnitude of the determination coefficient R square between variable X and Y is 0.677, amounting to 67.7%. This indicates the influence of the regression between X and Y. The R square value is 67.7%. This means that the product variable is able to explain the variance in purchasing decisions by 67.7%. While the remaining 32.3% is influenced by other independent variables not discussed in this study.

DISCUSSION

Based on the statistical analysis, we found that digital marketing significantly impacts the sales of micro-enterprises in the culinary sector in Gorontalo City. This suggests that the more optimally businesses utilize digital marketing strategies, such as promotions through social media, marketplace platforms, and online delivery services, the higher their sales will be.

The use of digital marketing has a significant impact on increasing sales. Micro Enterprises in the culinary sector. Through digital marketing strategies such as the use of social media, websites, and e-commerce platforms, business actors Micro Enterprises can reach a wider market without relying on a physical location. Engaging promotional content such as product photos, recipe videos, customer testimonials, and seasonal discounts can effectively attract potential customers, increasing the chances of a transaction.

In the digital era, marketing using digital platforms is increasingly common. This is commonly referred to as social media marketing, which is conducted using social media accounts such as Facebook, Instagram, and websites. This is certainly supported by observing the behavior of each consumer. The existence of digitalization makes it easier for every consumer to find what they want easily (Ningrum, 2024). This is in line with the theory that digital marketing is a marketing strategy that uses digital media and internet technology to promote products and services (Alamri, 2025).

Besides increasing market reach, digital marketing also offers advantages in terms of cost and time efficiency. With relatively lower costs compared to conventional marketing, micro-businesses can run measurable advertising campaigns through analytics. This allows them to adjust their strategies based on consumer behavior data, such as the best times to post, the most engaging content types, and customer demographics. This results in more targeted marketing and a direct impact on increased sales.

Moreover, digital marketing encourages two-way interaction between businesses and customers. Through social media and review sections on digital platforms, consumers can provide feedback or questions directly, which can then be answered quickly by micro-enterprises. This more personal relationship increases customer loyalty and builds trust in the products offered. In the long term, the presence of digital marketing helps culinary micro-enterprises increase competitiveness and maintain business sustainability amidst intense market competition.

This is in line with the theory put forward that marketing strategy in increasing sales volume is a series of plans, approaches, and targeted actions carried out by companies to identify consumer needs, create product value, and communicate and distribute it effectively in order to attract buying interest, retain customers, and ultimately increase the number of products or services sold (Santana, 2023). Digital marketing is now a major component that determines the success of a company. Businesses can track product launches online and client activity by utilizing digital marketing (Yakobus, 2025). It can be understood that digital marketing is the activity of marketing products, services, or brands using digital media and the internet, such as websites and social media to reach more customers efficiently and increase sales.

While sharing key variables with previous research, this study differs in its context and business sector, focusing on micro-enterprises in the culinary sector in Gorontalo City. While most previous research has focused on the fashion, clothing, or general business sectors in other regions, this study provides new empirical evidence on the regional culinary sector, which has local market characteristics. Furthermore, this study strengthens the position of digital marketing as an effective strategy for accelerating sales growth for micro-enterprises in the culinary sector in the digital era.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of statistical tests, it can be concluded that the use of digital marketing has a significant impact on increasing sales for micro-enterprises in the culinary sector in Gorontalo City. This means that the better the digital marketing strategy implemented by entrepreneurs, the higher the sales levels they can achieve. Therefore, micro-enterprises are expected to continue developing and optimizing the use of various digital platforms as part of their business strategies to increase competitiveness and business sustainability.

SUGGESTION

1. For MSME actors, this research is expected to be able to provide more information Utilization of Digital Marketing to increase sales levels of MSMEs in the culinary sector in Gorontalo City.
2. For further researchers, the results of this study are expected to be able to expanding the research sample so that the research results are more representative and can be generalized. In a quantitative research study on the influence of the use of Digital Marketing on the sales level of MSMEs in the culinary sector.

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