



The Effect Of Digital Marketing On Consumer Purchase Intention In Micro, Small And Medium Enterprises In The Food Sector In Makassar City

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the effect of digital marketing on consumer purchase intention in micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the food sector. The research was conducted on food sector MSMEs in Makassar City, South Sulawesi Province. The sample in this study consisted of 100 respondents. The sampling technique used was incidental sampling. The type of data used in this study was quantitative data. Data collection was conducted through observation and interviews with respondents, followed by the distribution of questionnaires. The collected data were then analyzed using simple linear regression analysis. The results of the study indicate that there is a significant and positive effect of digital marketing on consumer purchase intention in food sector MSMEs in Makassar City. This means that the better the implementation of digital marketing by food sector MSME actors, the higher the consumer purchase intention will be. Conversely, if the implementation of digital marketing is poor, consumer purchase intention will decrease.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Purchase Intention, Micro, Small, Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has changed the way businesses operate, especially in marketing. In Indonesia, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the culinary sector play a very important role in the economy, accounting for a large proportion of gross domestic product and providing employment for many people. However, despite this great potential, many MSMEs still have difficulty in reaching consumers and increasing their sales.

Digital development is moving so fast. The results of a survey by the Indonesian Internet Service Implementation Association (APJII) show that internet penetration in Indonesia has reached 79.5% by 2024. This is driven by the use of the internet which is increasingly becoming a need for the community, especially since the Corona Virus Disease-2019 (Covid-19) pandemic in 2020 and changing the paradigm of society to use digital media as an effective and efficient means.



Although the growth rate is not as large as during the Covid-19 pandemic, this positive trend reflects the increasing importance of the role of the internet in the lives of the Indonesian people.

The industrial revolution 4.0 has made digital technology one of the capital needed by industry players to develop their businesses. With digital technology, a country can push its economy towards a digital economy. In this case, MSMEs are the spearhead in advancing the country's economy because they have contributed to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and increased employment.

The Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia in a press release dated January 30, 2025 said that the role of MSMEs remains the backbone of the national economy, with the number of MSMEs in Indonesia currently reaching 99% of the total national business units. The contribution of MSMEs to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) reaches 60%, labor absorption reaches 97% of the total national workforce.

Digitalization in Indonesia can indeed bring many positive impacts. For this reason, the application of digital media as a marketing and branding strategy is considered effective to increase consumer purchasing power. So that it makes it easier for consumers to find the product information they need before buying a product by creating interesting content, in the form of images and videos and promoting their product brands on marketplace channels so that they can be known more widely.

Digital marketing strategies are emerging as an effective solution to overcome these challenges. By leveraging digital platforms such as social media, e-commerce, and content-based marketing, culinary MSMEs can expand their market reach, increase product visibility, and better interact with consumers. Several studies show that MSMEs that adopt digital marketing strategies experience a significant increase in sales and are able to compete better in the market.

However, implementing a digital marketing strategy is not without challenges. Many MSMEs still do not understand how to use digital technology effectively. Limited resources, both financially and skillfully, are often an obstacle to implementing the right strategy.

Although many studies have examined the influence of digital marketing on the consumer behavior of MSMEs, there are several research gaps that need to be filled. First, most previous research has focused on actual purchase decisions as dependent variables (Sino et al., 2025)(Halik



et al., 2021), while purchase intention as a psychological stage that precedes a purchase decision still receives less special attention. In fact, understanding purchase intent is very important because it is a strong predictor of actual purchasing behavior and provides insight into consumers' cognitive processes before making a transaction.

Second, previous research has used a multivariate approach with several independent variables simultaneously, such as digital marketing combined with service quality (Sino et al., 2025), brand awareness (Halik et al., 2021) or Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) (Mala et al., 2023). This makes it difficult to understand the singular and direct contribution of digital marketing to consumer purchase intent. Third, the geographical context of the previous research was more in the Java or Jakarta region, while Makassar City as a representation of Eastern Indonesia is still very limited to be explored, even though the characteristics of the market and consumer culture in this region have their own uniqueness.

This study contributes novelty by: (1) A specific focus on purchase intention as a single dependent variable, different from previous studies that analyzed more actual purchase decisions; (2) A simple but focused methodological approach using simple linear regression analysis to measure the single and direct influence of digital marketing on purchase intent, providing a clear baseline understanding without the complexity of mediation or moderation variables; (3) The specific geographical context of MSMEs in the food sector in Makassar City, provides a new empirical contribution to the Eastern Indonesia region that is still underexplored in the digital marketing literature; and (4) The post-pandemic temporal context where the digitalization of MSMEs has become an urgent need with internet penetration that is quite in demand.

Based on the background described, the researcher is interested in conducting research on the influence of digital marketing on consumer purchase intentions in MSMEs in the food sector in Makassar City. This research is expected to make a theoretical and practical contribution for MSME actors in designing digital marketing strategies that are more effective and relevant to market needs.



METHOD

Types of Research

This research is quantitative research with a correlational descriptive research design to analyze the influence of digital marketing on buying interest in food MSMEs. This approach was chosen because the study aims to test the cause-and-effect relationship between independent variables (digital marketing) and dependent variables (buying interest) based on data obtained from respondents.

Population and Sample

The population in this study is consumers who have made purchases at food MSMEs that utilize digital marketing in their marketing strategies in Makassar City. The sample in this study consisted of 100 respondents. Sampling is based on the minimum sample in the correlational research which is 30 (Gay, 2011). The sample technique used in this study is the incidental sampling technique. Where Incidental sampling is a non-probability sampling technique that is carried out by selecting anyone who is coincidentally encountered by the researcher and considered suitable as a data source.

Research Variables

1. Independent Variable: Digital Marketing (X): Digital marketing is measured using the following indicators: (1) Complete product information, (2) Active consumer enthusiasm, (3) Up to date information.
2. Dependent Variable: Buy Interest (Y): Buying interest is measured using the following indicators: (1) Transactional interest, (2) Referential interest, (3) Preferential interest, (4) Exploratory interest.

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection was carried out through observation and interviews with respondents, then continued with the distribution of questionnaires. The questionnaire used a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) to measure respondents' perception of digital marketing and purchase intent.



Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data was then analyzed using simple linear regression analysis. Before the regression analysis is carried out, the Validity and Reliability Test of the research instrument is first carried out to ensure that the measuring tool used is appropriate and consistent in measuring the variables being studied. Data analysis was carried out using SPSS software version 25.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

The results of this study were made in the form of a table, namely Table 1 Analysis of respondent characteristics to see the identity of respondents from the criteria of gender, age and last education. Furthermore, Table 2 is the result of an analysis of the influence of digital marketing on consumer buying interest in Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the food sector in Makassar City.

| | Variable | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Gender | Woman | 54 | 54 |
| | Man | 46 | 46 |
| | Total | 100 | 100 |
| Age | < 20 Years | 10 | 10 |
| | 20 – 30 Years | 77 | 77 |
| | 31 – 40 Years | 11 | 11 |
| | 41 – 50 Years | 2 | 2 |
| | > 50 Years | 0 | 0 |
| | Total | 100 | 100 |
| Education | SD | 0 | 0 |
| | JUNIOR | 2 | 2 |
| | SMA | 45 | 45 |
| | Diploma | 9 | 9 |
| | Bachelor | 43 | 43 |
| | Postgraduate | 1 | 1 |
| | Total | 100 | 100 |

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics Analysis

Based on the results of the distribution of respondent characteristics, it can be concluded that the majority of MSME consumers in the food sector in Makassar City are dominated by young women (20-30 years old) with secondary to higher education levels (high school and undergraduate). This composition shows that the respondent group is in a productive age with a high level of activity on social media and wide access to digital technology. With a relatively good



educational background, respondents have the ability to understand messages, images, and communication strategies conveyed through digital platforms, so that they become potential target markets for MSME actors in marketing their products online.

This dominance of young and highly educated women also illustrates the changing behavior of modern consumers in the digital age, where purchasing decisions for food products are not only based on primary needs, but also on convenience factors, brand image, and the appeal of digital content. Therefore, these findings reinforce that digital marketing plays a significant role in influencing the buying interest of MSME consumers in the food sector, especially in urban environments such as Makassar, where people tend to be responsive to digital innovations and consumption trends based on online media.

| Type | | Coefficient | | | | t | Sig. | | |
|------|------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|------|-------|------|--|--|
| | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | Beta | | | | |
| | | B | Std. Error | | | | | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | 17 | 17.780 | 3.1 | | 5.571 | .000 | | |
| | MB | .2492 | .092 | .264 | .09 | 2.709 | .008 | | |

a. Dependent Variable: DM

Table 2. Analysis of the influence of digital marketing on consumer buying interest in MSMEs in the food sector in Makassar City

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the Sig value obtained is 0.008 which is smaller than 0.05. So it can be concluded that the hypothesis in this study is accepted, namely that digital marketing has a significant and positive effect on the buying interest of food consumers in MSMEs in Makassar City.

Discussion

Based on the results of the study, it was found that digital marketing has a positive and significant effect on consumer buying interest in MSMEs in the food sector in Makassar City. These results show that the element of digital marketing is not only a complement, but has become a cognitive and affective driver in the consumer pre-purchase process. The implementation of digital marketing strategies by MSMEs in the food sector in Makassar City has a direct impact on increasing consumer buying interest. The results of the analysis show that the more intense and



effective digital marketing activities are, the greater the tendency of consumers to express interest in buying food products from these MSMEs.

Theoretically, these findings can be placed in several frameworks. First, the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) theory states that marketing stimuli affect the internal conditions of consumers (organisms: perceptions, attitudes, interests) which then triggers a response, namely buying interest. In this context, digital marketing by MSMEs in the food sector in Makassar acts as a stimulus that arouses buying interest as a consumer response. Second, from the perspective of the hierarchy of effects (Awareness → Interest → Desire → Action) digital marketing increases awareness of MSME products, then gives rise to interest and desire which then stimulates buying interest. Third, in the framework of Engagement Marketing and digital trust, digital interactions initiated by MSMEs through social media or e-WOM build consumer engagement and trust, an important factor in triggering buying interest.

Previous research has shown a lot of positive influence of digital marketing on purchasing decisions or purchase intentions, although many are not specific to the purchase intention of food MSMEs in Eastern Indonesia. For example, testing social media-based digital marketing on MSMEs of food products in Banten and finding a significant influence on purchasing decisions (Erlangga et al., 2021). [ResearchGate](#) In a study on food MSMEs in Indonesia, it is shown that digital marketing has a positive influence on purchasing decisions, and the brand image as a mediator strengthens this influence (Purwanto, 2022). In researching social media users in the Indonesian food industry and showing that a proper understanding of the characteristics of target audiences and platforms affects the effectiveness of social media marketing (Muliawan, 2024). [AASMR](#) Furthermore, in an international regional study, it was found that social media influences interest in buying organic products through attitude variables, subjective norms, and behavioral control (Theory of Planned Behavior) although not directly (Arias et al., 2025). [MDPI](#) Also, it shows that the use of social networks as a medium for the promotion of handicraft businesses in Palembang has a positive impact on consumer promotion and engagement (Rahadi & Abdillah, 2013).

In the context of your research, empirical results show that digital marketing in MSMEs in the food sector in Makassar City not only increases awareness or engagement, but also



significantly increases consumer buying interest, a pre-purchase stage that is very relevant to be directed to turn into a real purchase. These results fill a gap often referred to in the literature: many studies focus on the actual purchase decision or final outcome, while purchase intent as an initial psychological stage is still poorly analyzed in isolation. Your research emphasizes that digital marketing interventions by MSMEs in the food sector in Makassar City alone (without additional mediation/moderation) are enough to have a significant influence on buying interest in providing an empirical baseline for further research that may add mediation/moderation variables.

Empirically, this study also shows that food consumers in Makassar City are very responsive to digital channels. For example, MSMEs that use active social media, post attractive visual content (food photos/videos), facilitate interaction (comments, direct messages), utilize e-WOM (reviews, customer testimonials) obtain higher purchasing interest scores than MSMEs that have not optimized digital. This is consistent with research that shows that the elements of interaction and credibility in social media marketing increase buying interest and that digital marketing through content, influencers, online reviews can increase the buying interest of Generation Z in Food and Beverage (F&B) MSME products (Erlangga et al., 2021).

From the perspective of the influence mechanism, it can be explained that digital marketing carried out by MSMEs as dirty as food in Makassar City strengthens several paths: (1) Increasing the ease of access to product information, consumers are easier to see through posts, stories and videos; (2) Building brand trust and credibility through digital testimonials and consumer reviews; (3) Increase consumer engagement through two-way interaction on social media, so that consumers feel "known" and "engaged"; (4) Strengthening brand awareness and brand image even on a small scale for MSMEs, through attractive visual displays and consistent digital activities; and (5) facilitate transactions/access to purchases with online links or information that lead to marketplaces or digital orders, shortening the distance between buying interest and action. The combination of these paths results in digital marketing not only generating buying interest but also setting the conditions for that interest to be more likely to be realized in purchases.

These findings provide some important implications. Practically, for MSMEs as dirty as food in Makassar City, the results of the study show that investment in digital marketing, such as active social media management, quality visual content, digital testimonials, e-WOM, and the ease of



online ordering are very relevant strategies to increase consumer buying interest. MSMEs should not rely solely on offline sales or conventional promotions; In the digital era, food consumers are increasingly looking for information online before buying. The right use of social media and digital channels can be a competitive advantage. In addition, for policy makers (for example, the cooperative/MSME office, the Makassar City Government) it is important to support MSME digital literacy, provide digital marketing training, and facilitate access to technology so that small MSMEs can also utilize digital marketing effectively.

This research contributes several things. First, strengthening empirical evidence that digital marketing has a significant influence on purchase intent in the context of MSMEs in the food sector, especially in the Eastern Indonesia region (Makassar City) which was previously underexplored. Second, emphasizing that focusing on purchase intent as an important variable outcome provides earlier insight into the consumer process than just focusing on actual purchase decisions. Third, this study shows that the influence of digital marketing can be understood as a single path (direct effect) without additional mediation/moderation, at least in this context which can be a baseline for further studies that add mediator variables such as brand trust, e-WOM, or moderation such as consumer characteristics, digitalization level, or demographics. Fourth, this study reminds that the geographical context and characteristics of the local market (Makassar with the branding "City of Delicious Food") also play a role meaning that the generalization of findings generally needs to consider the local context.

The results of this study also need to be discussed in terms of limitations. First, although a positive influence on buying interest has been found, this variable has not been measured whether it is true to translate into actual purchases, therefore, buying interest as a pre-purchase indicator remains only a predictor, not an action. This is in accordance with the literature that states that buying interest does not always immediately become an actual purchase. Second, this study focuses on the single influence of digital marketing without considering control variables or mediation/moderation in depth (e.g. product quality, price, physical location, brand trust, e-WOM) although it is also an advantage in affirming the single effect. Third, the research design may be cross-sectional so long-term causality cannot be tested. Fourth, although the local context of



Makassar makes a new contribution, it also limits generalization to the context of MSMEs in the food sector in other regions with different market characteristics.

In the context of MSMEs in the food sector in Makassar City, digital marketing has proven to be an important factor that encourages consumer buying interest. This shifts the paradigm that small MSMEs only rely on conventional promotions or oral networks; In the digital era, digital channels and online interaction play a strategic role. Therefore, for MSME actors in the food sector in Makassar City, prioritizing digital marketing is not just an option but a must to strengthen product attractiveness and increase purchasing potential. For the researcher, this study adds to the literature on MSME digital marketing in the Eastern Indonesia region and focuses on the pre-purchase stage (buying interest) that has received less attention so far.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that digital marketing has a positive and significant effect on consumer buying interest in MSMEs in the food sector in Makassar City. Marketing strategies based on social media, e-commerce, and digital interaction have been proven to increase consumer awareness, trust, and engagement with MSME products. These results show that the better MSME actors manage digital content and online communication, the higher the tendency of consumers to buy their products. Thus, digital marketing is a strategic instrument in strengthening the competitiveness of MSMEs in the food sector in the era of technology-based economic transformation. The limitations of this study are the limited scope of the area in Makassar City and the cross-sectional approach; further studies are suggested to expand the context and add mediating variables such as brand trust or e-WOM.

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