

DIGITAL MARKETING AND BRAND IMAGE IN DRIVING PURCHASING DECISIONS IN UMKM COFFEE SHOPS IN KENDARI CITY

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ABSTRACT

Advances in digital marketing technology have influenced consumer patterns in recognizing, considering, and determining choices regarding coffee shop. However, the implementation of this strategy in the MSME sector has not yet been fully targeted and sustainable. This situation raises questions about the role of digital marketing in building a brand. image and its influence on the consumer purchasing decision process. This study aims to examine the application of digital marketing, the brand formation process image, and consumer purchasing decisions in coffee SMEs shop in Kendari City. This study employed a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach. Data collection was conducted through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation involving business owners, social media managers, and customers selected using purposive sampling techniques. Data were then analyzed through a process of reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results show that digital marketing can play a meaningful role when managed consistently, particularly through the use of appropriate media, content presentation tailored to consumer needs, responsive responses, and the use of customer experiences and testimonials. This strategy contributes to brand building. image through a professional image, strong brand identity, attractive visuals, and increased customer trust. A positive brand image then strengthens consumer confidence in making choices, including encouraging repeat purchases. These findings demonstrate the importance of digital marketing management that aligns with strengthening brand identity and improving the quality of the customer experience.

Keywords: digital marketing, brand image, MSMEs.

INTRODUCTION

The growth of the coffee industry in Indonesia in recent years has shown increasingly significant progress. This is inextricably linked to the increasing consumption of coffee by people, particularly in urban areas, and the growth of coffee micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). Shops contribute to regional economic activity. These changes coincide with the digitalization process, which has led to shifts in consumer behavior (Safitri et al. 2025) . The presence of digital technology has given people different ways to obtain information, compare various options, evaluate products, and even make purchasing decisions (Faiq and Khalik 2026) . Social media, online consumer reviews, visual materials, and brand communications through various digital platforms now serve a broader function than simply being a medium for promotion (Romli et al. 2026) . These various channels have become part of a marketing strategy that can influence how consumers form perceptions of a brand (Virly et al. 2026) .

In such conditions, the implementation of digital marketing has an important meaning for coffee MSMEs shop. Utilizing digital media allows businesses to reach potential consumers more widely, build closer communication with customers, and create a more recognizable brand identity and image (Pakpahan et al. 2026; Rizki 2027) . The image formed through various digital activities can ultimately be related to consumer considerations when selecting and purchasing products (Hidayat et al. 2026) . A similar phenomenon can be found in the development of coffee shops. shops in several developing cities, including Kendari. Increasingly intense competition between businesses demands that MSMEs develop competitive advantages. However, these demands must be met with generally limited marketing resources (Chaudhry and Kumar 2024) . Problems in implementing digital marketing in MSME coffee Shop success isn't just about the ability to use technology. Although a number of businesses have utilized social media and various digital tools, their use hasn't always been planned and sustained (Kumar, Sinha, and Kumar 2026) . In practice, some businesses still use digital media only to post promotional information at specific times without clear content planning (Prakoso et al. 2026; Septriyanto et al. 2026) . Managing consumer communications, monitoring audience responses , and evaluating the effectiveness of marketing activities haven't always been part of business management (Kumar, Sinha, and Kumar 2026) . This situation means that a digital presence doesn't automatically result in strong brand perceptions or increased purchasing decisions.

Therefore, the issue that needs to be addressed is not simply whether an MSME has used digital media, but rather how it is utilized, how consumers respond to these activities, and how the resulting perceptions influence purchasing behavior. Several previous studies have shown that this issue warrants further study. Research (Carolina et al. 2024; Komang et al. 2026) For example, it shows that utilizing Instagram, TikTok , and collaborating with micro-influencers can help expand market reach while strengthening the image of a local coffee brand. Other findings (Prakoso et al. 2026; Wiweko and Anggara 2026) showed that the shift

towards digital-based marketing can be associated with increased sales when social media is used more actively in marketing activities. However, different conditions were found in studies (Dakshit et al. 2026; Xu and Rusu 2026). This indicates that the level of digital technology utilization among business actors is not yet uniform. Limited workforce or human resources are also factors that affect the benefits of digital marketing for brand building. Image and sales growth have not been maximized. These differences in results indicate that digital marketing success is not solely determined by technology use, but is also influenced by business conditions, management skills, implemented strategies, and consumer response to marketing activities.

Although research on digital marketing has progressed, there is still room for further study. Previous studies have not fully explained the process by which digital marketing elements, such as visual quality, intensity of communication with consumers, and electronic marketing, are integrated. word of Word of mouth (e-WOM), contributes to brand building image of UMKM coffee shop. In addition, a study that specifically explains the brand position The role of image as a link between digital marketing activities and consumer purchasing decisions is still relatively limited, especially in areas that have not yet been the subject of much marketing research. In this regard, the context of Kendari City is relevant in examining this issue. As one of the centers of economic activity in eastern Indonesia, Kendari has experienced growth in internet use as well as the growth of the MSME sector. This development goes hand in hand with the increasing number of coffee shops. The presence of shops creates more competitive business competition. This situation makes the need to establish a distinct and easily recognizable business identity even more crucial. Furthermore, Kendari has not been the focus of digital marketing studies for MSMEs as much as other major cities. However, the social and cultural characteristics of the community, as well as the purchasing power of the area, can influence consumer patterns in receiving digital information and determining product choices.

Therefore, research in this context can provide insight into whether findings obtained from other regions can be directly applied or require adjustments to suit local characteristics. Based on these conditions, this research is directed at analyzing the relationship between digital marketing and brand awareness. image with consumer purchasing decisions in coffee SMEs shop in Kendari City. This study specifically seeks to understand the implementation of digital marketing activities carried out by business actors, the process of forming brand image based on consumer perception, and the role of both aspects in driving purchasing decisions. The research results are expected to provide a more in-depth empirical picture of digital marketing practices in MSMEs and serve as considerations in designing marketing strategies that align with evolving consumer behavior in the digital era. The uniqueness of this research lies in its focus on coffee MSMEs. shop in Kendari City and efforts to understand the relationship between digital marketing and brand image, and purchasing decisions in a

specific context. This study is expected to add empirical references to an area that is still relatively limited in the digital marketing literature. Furthermore, this research can broaden understanding of the application of digital marketing strategies in small-scale businesses with limited resources. Practically, the research results are expected to provide applicable considerations for MSMEs in managing digital marketing and building brand image. Meanwhile, academically, this research can enrich discussions on digital marketing, brand image, and consumer behavior in the context of the development of MSMEs in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study applies a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design to gain a deep understanding of the subjective experiences of coffee MSME actors. shop in implementing digital marketing, building brand image, and addressing the consumer purchasing decision process. The selection of this approach is based on the research focus, which emphasizes interpreting the informant's real-life experiences rather than testing relationships between variables through statistical analysis. In phenomenology, individual life experiences are an important source for understanding a phenomenon, so this approach is considered appropriate for describing conditions occurring in the field. The research population includes business actors and active consumers of coffee MSMEs. shops in Kendari City. Informants were selected using purposive sampling techniques involving business owners, social media managers, and customers who have direct knowledge and experience with digital coffee activities. Kendari City was chosen as the research location because the development of MSMEs and the use of digital technology in the region continues to increase, accompanied by competition in the coffee business. The increasingly competitive shop market. Data collection was conducted through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation to obtain comprehensive information about experiences, conditions, and social contexts. Next, the data was analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model through the stages of data reduction, information presentation, and conclusion drawing to identify patterns and key meanings from the research results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Digital Marketing

Based on the analysis conducted, it shows that the success of digital marketing in shaping consumer perceptions is not determined by just one aspect, but by the consistency of activities, the accuracy of platform selection, content quality, speed in responding to consumers, and the use of customer testimonials. For coffee MSMEs Shop, routine and planned use of digital media can increase business recognition among consumers. Meanwhile, informative and engaging visual content, coupled with responsive communication, can create the impression that the business is professionally managed and attentive to customer needs.

Findings (Rohayati 2026; Wahyuningtiyas and Hermawan 2026) indicate that determining the target audience, utilizing appropriate digital channels, and providing relevant content are crucial elements in supporting the effectiveness of digital marketing. Other research, for example, (Hasan and Mayr 2027; Tafesse and Hussain 2026) on digital marketing strategies and media content quality, also shows that presenting engaging material that aligns with audience characteristics can increase brand appeal and consumer engagement. This demonstrates that digital marketing serves not only to convey promotions but also plays a role in fostering trust and closer relationships with consumers. However, a high upload frequency may not necessarily produce optimal impact if the material delivered is irrelevant, inconsistent, or unable to encourage interaction. Thus, the quality of communication is more important than simply the number of activities. In MSME coffee shop in Kendari, the effectiveness of digital marketing is seen when all these elements run in an integrated manner and support each other in building a business image that consumers trust.

Brand image

Based on the results of the analysis that has been carried out, it shows that the brand image of UMKM coffee shop in Kendari City is formed through a number of interrelated elements, including a professional impression, visual appearance, consumer trust, identity consistency, and brand recognition. Well-organized digital media presentation, consistent communication style, and alignment between promotional information and product and service conditions can influence consumers' perceptions of a coffee shop as a business that is managed seriously and has credibility.

This is in line with research (Husriadi 2026; Machado, Alalawi, and Sengupta 2026) which shows that the application of visual identity through the selection of colors, typography that has local character, and the use of regional elements can support the strengthening of the image of coffee shop in Kendari. Furthermore, another study (Castilla-Polo 2026) found that consistency in content presentation, the ability to respond quickly, and the availability of consumer reviews contribute to building a digital reputation and increasing customer loyalty for MSMEs. However, an attractive visual appearance cannot guarantee a strong brand image without the appropriate quality of service and customer experience. A mismatch between digital messages and in-person service can erode consumer trust. Therefore, brand building Image is not enough to rely solely on aesthetic aspects, but must be supported by harmony between the communicated identity and the actual customer experience. Coffee shops with easily recognizable identities tend to be able to retain consumer attention when the brand's appearance, atmosphere, and interactions via social media are conveyed consistently. Thus, the brand Image plays a role in connecting consumers' initial impressions with their beliefs before making a purchase.

Buying decision

Consumer purchasing decisions in coffee SMEs Shop decision-making in Kendari City can be understood as a gradual process formed from various consumer experiences. This process begins with the emergence of interest in a product, develops into trust, continues with pre-purchase considerations, forms purchase intention, and ultimately leads to the possibility of repurchasing. Research shows that consumer decisions are not solely driven by immediate needs but are also influenced by the alignment between information obtained through digital media, brand perceptions, and experiences experienced when interacting with products and services. This is in line with research (Aoki and Matsui 2025; Li, Liu, and Wang 2026) which shows that consumer beliefs, recommendations from others, and the process of evaluating available information are important factors in determining purchasing decisions. Other findings (Brand, Drives, and Image 2026; Hidayat et al. 2026) show that strong purchase intentions can develop into purchasing or repeat purchases when consumers already have a preference for a brand.

Established trust in a brand can also strengthen consumers' tendency to purchase and maintain a relationship with a business. However, purchase intentions don't always translate into concrete actions. Doubts about price, product quality, or service quality can cause consumers to delay or cancel a purchase. Therefore, purchasing decisions in this study are viewed as the result of an accumulation of positive perceptions and experiences formed through digital marketing and branding image. When coffee If a shop is able to maintain its appeal, trust, and consistent experience, the opportunity for consumers to make purchases and return to buy becomes increasingly open.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion The research results show that digital marketing has a close relationship with brand. image in driving consumer purchasing decisions in coffee SMEs shop in Kendari City. The use of digital media is not only used to convey information and promotions, but also as a means of building communication, closeness, and trust between consumers and the brand. Consistent digital activity, the relevance of material to audience needs, engaging visuals, quick responses, and the use of customer testimonials contribute to a positive perception of coffee shop. This perception then developed into a brand image through a maintained identity, professional image, attractive brand character, and alignment between digital communications and consumer experience.

A positive brand image helps consumers consider various options, increases confidence, and influences purchasing decisions, including the likelihood of repeat purchases. Thus,

purchasing decisions are the result of an interconnected process involving digital activities, brand image formation, trust, and customer experience. Therefore, coffee MSMEs Shops in Kendari City are advised to manage their digital marketing in a more targeted manner by maintaining their visual identity, improving content quality, building active interactions, and responding quickly. Brand development Image development should go hand in hand with efforts to maintain consistency between digital media communications and the actual conditions consumers receive, both in terms of product and service. Future research could include coffee as an object. A more diverse shop and involving consumers with broader characteristics so that the purchasing decision-making process can be analyzed in more depth.

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