

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN HORTICULTURAL PRODUCT PROMOTION THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SOCIAL MEDIA-BASED ADVERTISING STRATEGIES ON INCREASING SALES OF YOUNG FARMERS

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of social media-based advertising strategies in increasing sales of horticultural products managed by young farmers. The research approach uses quantitative methods with the support of qualitative data, through surveys of 60 young farmers and in-depth interviews to obtain comprehensive information on digital marketing strategies. The results show that the majority of young farmers aged 21–35 years use Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and WhatsApp Business platforms as the main means of promotion. The most widely used advertising strategies include organic content (75%), paid advertising (60%), and partnerships with micro-influencers (30%). Data analysis shows that the combination of visual content and paid advertising has driven an average increase in sales of 35% in the past six months, much higher than farmers who still rely on traditional promotions with a 10–15% increase. These findings support the theory of content marketing, AIDA, and digital marketing performance, which assert that social media-based promotions can increase consumer engagement, build product branding, and expand market reach. This study recommends optimizing digital strategies and strengthening online marketing literacy to support the sustainability of young farmers' horticultural businesses in the digital economy era.

Keywords: *Digital Transformation, Horticulture, Social Media, Digital Advertising, Young Farmers*

INTRODUCTION

In the midst of the acceleration of the digital era, young Indonesian farmers are facing new challenges and opportunities in marketing their horticultural products (Aprilia et al., 2024). The presence of information and communication technology opens up previously unimaginable promotional paths (Marsini & Dwikoranto, 2022). Digital transformation is not just the adoption of digital tools or platforms, but has become an integral part of modern horticulture business strategies (Marsini, 2022). Farmers not only rely on traditional markets, but now penetrate consumers online. Social media is the main vehicle. With its broad reach and audience segmentation capabilities, social media offers the potential to forge direct connections between young farmers and end consumers (Surasmi et al., 2022). For young farmers, who have innovative energy and more familiar access to technology, digital transformation opens up opportunities to form strong brands and build consumer trust through digital interactions. However, this transition is not automatically seamless. There is a real need to understand how social media-based advertising strategies such as paid advertising, organic content, influencers can be optimized to generate increased sales. This research aims to explore the effectiveness of various advertising strategies on social media, such as Facebook Ads, Instagram Stories, TikTok Shop, and others, in promoting horticultural products produced by young farmers in Indonesia. As an example of the case, young farmers who use Instagram to introduce their organic vegetables are able to present compelling visual content: planting videos, harvesting processes, consumer testimonials, and discount promos (Anis Kurli et al., 2025). With the foundation of digital marketing theory, we can evaluate effectiveness indicators such as engagement rate, ad clicks, conversion rate, and of course actual sales that occur after the campaign runs. Quantitative and qualitative approaches are complementary; The numerical data provides an overview of the impact of sales, while in-depth interviews reveal inspirations, challenges, and best practices from the young farmers themselves. In addition, aspects of age consumer demographics, online purchasing preferences, geographical location as well as characteristics of educated young farmers, digital skills all affect how

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advertising works and is accepted by the market. In the following paragraphs, we will convey an overview of the horticultural situation in Indonesia, the economic potential, the development of young farmers, and relevant digital marketing trends. Indonesia as an agrarian country has great potential in the horticultural sector: fruits, vegetables, medicinal plants but the distribution of agricultural products is often hampered by market access and supply chain efficiency. The presence of young digitally savvy farmers is a breath of fresh air; They are more open to technological innovations, have a network on social media, and are able to produce creative content to attract buyers (Aprilia et al., 2024). Classic obstacles such as ignorance of market prices, inability to develop branding, or lack of access to distribution can now be shortened by the use of digital platforms and the right marketing strategy.

In this context, advertising strategies on social media have two main elements: content creativity and ad budget optimization. Content should capture both visual and emotional attention, while ad settings should be dexterous in targeting relevant audiences. Young farmers who learn to combine short videos of the cultivation process, photos of fresh products, and storytelling of their work experiences in the fields, usually get higher responses in the form of likes, comments, and direct messages for purchases. The study also assessed the ROI (return on investment) of the ad campaign: how many new customers, the frequency of repeat purchases, and the growth in converted turnover from digital traffic. To strengthen the analysis, the study also compared two groups: young farmers who use active social media advertising strategies and those who still rely on traditional promotional methods such as local stalls or distributors. Preliminary results show that young farmers who are actively advertising digital experience increased reach to tens of thousands of local audiences, engagement rates are two to three times higher, and sales growth is significant within a few months. This preliminary conclusion confirms that digital transformation in the promotion of horticultural products through social media strategies is not just a momentary trend; It is a strategic bridge that unites young farmers with modern digital consumers, promising a positive impact on future agricultural sales and empowerment.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research method is designed to understand how social media-based advertising strategies affect the increase in sales of horticultural products carried out by young farmers. The approach used in this study is a quantitative approach supported by qualitative data, so that it is able to provide a comprehensive picture both in terms of sales figures and the experience of young farmers in utilizing social media (Rachmad et al., 2024). This study uses the survey method as the main technique for quantitative data collection. The survey was conducted by distributing questionnaires to young farmers who are actively marketing horticultural products through social media, such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and WhatsApp Business. The questionnaire contains questions about the frequency of social media use, the type of advertising strategy used (paid advertising, organic content, collaborations with influencers, or bundling promotions), the level of audience reach, and its impact on sales in a given period. In addition to surveys, in-depth interviews were conducted to complete qualitative data. This interview focused on understanding the motivation of young farmers to use social media, the challenges they face in the digital promotion process, and the strategies they feel are most effective. The triangulation technique is used to ensure the validity of the data, where the information from the questionnaire will be compared with the results of the interview and the actual sales data obtained from the respondents (Wijaya, 2018).

The research population is young farmers who manage horticultural businesses in several horticultural production centers in Indonesia. The research sample was determined using the purposive sampling technique, which is to select young farmers who meet the criteria: aged 20–40 years, have been actively selling horticultural products online for at least the last six months, and have monthly sales records. The target sample number is 50-75 young farmers, to obtain representative data. The research instrument was in the form of a questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale that measured the perception of the effectiveness of advertising strategies, engagement levels on social media, and impact on sales. Meanwhile, the interview guidelines are structured in a semi-structured manner so that respondents can share their experiences without being limited to closed-ended questions. Quantitative data analysis was carried out using descriptive analysis techniques and simple regression, to determine the relationship between the intensity of social media use and the increase in sales of horticultural products. Meanwhile, qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis, by grouping the findings of the interviews into themes such as content creativity, digital barriers, and consumer responses (Retnawati, 2017). Through this combination of methods, the research is expected to be able to answer the main questions regarding the effectiveness of digital transformation and social media advertising strategies in driving sales growth of young farmers. The results of this method will provide practical recommendations for young farmers and related parties in maximizing digital marketing opportunities in the horticulture sector.

RESULTS OF RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

1. Characteristics of Research Respondents

The survey results show that the majority of respondents in this study are young farmers aged 21-35 years who are actively managing horticultural businesses independently. Of the total 60 respondents, 65% were male and 35% were female. Horticultural products marketed vary, ranging from organic vegetables (45%), fresh fruits (35%), to ornamental plants (20%). In terms of social media use, Instagram and Facebook are the most dominant platforms for promotion, followed by TikTok and WhatsApp Business. This shows that young farmers prefer platforms with strong visual capabilities to showcase horticultural products.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Characteristic	Category	Percentage (%)
Age	21–30 years old	55
	31–40 years	45
Gender	Man	65
	Woman	35
Types of Horticultural Products	Organic Vegetables	45
	Fruit	35
	Ornamental Plants	20
Main Platforms	Posted on Instagram	50
	Posted on Facebook	25
	TikTok	15
	Send a message to WhatsApp	10

The characteristics of the respondents showed the dominance of young farmers aged 21–35 years with a background in horticultural businesses such as organic vegetables, fresh fruits, and ornamental plants. These results are in line with the phenomenon of farmer regeneration in the digital era, where the younger generation has an openness to technological innovation and online marketing (Ramadayanti et al., 2025). The use of social media by the majority of respondents, especially Instagram (50%) and Facebook (25%) indicates the tendency of young farmers to choose visual-based platforms. Customer Engagement Theory in Social Media Marketing from (Brodie et al., 2011) emphasizing that visual content has high appeal in building emotional interactions with consumers. In the context of horticulture, the visual appeal of products such as fresh vegetables, brightly colored fruits, and ornamental flowers is one of the advantages that encourage consumers to make purchases. This also strengthens the principle of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), where the perception of ease of use and usefulness of social media increases the acceptance of digital technology by young farmers (Davis, 1989). Their ability to access and manage social media accounts is key to opening up a wider market than farmers who rely solely on traditional distribution.

2. Social Media Advertising Strategies Used

Young farmers use various strategies to attract consumer interest. The most popular strategy is organic content in the form of regular uploads of product photos and videos (75%), followed by paid advertising on Instagram and Facebook (60%), collaborations with micro-influencers (30%), and bundling promos and online discounts (25%). In-depth interviews show that visual content such as harvest videos, planting tips, and consumer testimonials are highly effective in increasing engagement. Young farmers also state that paid advertising helps expand market reach beyond their area of residence.

Table 2. Young Farmers Social Media Advertising Strategy

Advertising Strategy	Number of Farmers (n=60)	Percentage (%)
Regular organic content	45	75
Paid ads	36	60
Collaboration with influencers	18	30
Bundling promos & discounts	15	25

The dominant advertising strategies are regular organic content (75%) and paid advertising (60%). The use of organic content such as harvest photos, planting tutorial videos, and consumer testimonials supports the theory of Content Marketing which states that the success of digital promotion depends heavily on the information and emotional value conveyed to the audience (Rose, 2023). Engaging content can increase engagement rates, which ultimately leads to sales conversions. In addition to organic content, paid ads on Instagram and Facebook Ads are a means to expand consumer reach. This is in line with the theory of Hierarchy of Effects in marketing, which explains that advertising helps potential consumers move from the stage of awareness, interest, to purchase decision (CHARISMA, 2025). Interviews with respondents revealed that the targeted ads feature helps their horticultural products be seen by consumers in big cities, which were previously difficult to reach offline. Meanwhile, cooperation with micro-influencers (30%) is proof of the application of Social Influence Theory, where recommendations from figures trusted by the audience are able to influence purchasing decisions (Darmatama & Erdiansyah, 2021). While not all farmers use this strategy, those who do report increased traffic to social media accounts during the promotional period.

3. The Impact of Advertising Strategy on Increasing Sales

The results of the analysis show that the use of social media has a real impact on increasing sales. Respondents who actively use paid advertising and organic content experienced an average increase in sales of 35% in the last 6 months, while farmers who only rely on traditional promotions experienced an increase in sales of around 10–15%. The highest sales conversion rate from digital advertising comes from Instagram (40%), followed by TikTok (30%) and Facebook (20%), while WhatsApp Business functions more as a transaction channel after consumers know about products from other platforms.

Table 3. The Impact of Digital Strategy on Sales

Categories Farmers	Average Sales Increase (%)	Most Effective Platform
Social media active + paid advertising	35	Instagram (40%)
Only active social media without ads	20	TikTok (30%)
Traditional (offline) promotions	10–15	-

These results corroborate the findings that digital transformation through social media is able to expand market reach, increase consumer interaction, and drive sales growth for young farmers. Respondents also stated that the presence of social media helped them build the branding of horticultural products that were previously difficult to achieve through conventional distribution channels.

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The findings of the study show that young farmers who actively use social media with a combination of organic content and paid advertising have experienced an average increase in sales of 35% in the past six months. These results support the theory of Digital Marketing Performance which emphasizes the positive relationship between the frequency of digital promotions and the growth of sales turnover (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). Increased sales are also closely related to social media's ability to expand consumer reach and build direct interactions. For example, Instagram occupies the top position with a 40% conversion contribution due to its visual and interactive nature, in accordance with the concept of Visual Marketing which states that visual appeal plays an important role in influencing the purchasing behavior of agricultural products (Zámková et al., 2023). From a digital marketing perspective, this phenomenon also supports the AIDA Model (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action). Young farmers who regularly produce interesting content have succeeded in attracting the attention and interest of potential buyers. Consumer trust and desire are built through testimonials and real-time interactions on social media, which ultimately trigger purchase actions. Overall, this discussion emphasized that digital transformation through social media not only increases the visibility of horticultural products, but is also an important factor in the economic growth of young farmers. The integration of creative content, paid advertising, and interactive strategies has proven to be effective in driving sales increases compared to traditional promotional methods that are limited to the local market.

CONCLUSION

Research on Digital Transformation in Horticultural Product Promotion: The Effectiveness of Social Media-Based Advertising Strategies on Increasing Sales of Young Farmers emphasized that the use of social media makes a significant contribution to strengthening marketing strategies and increasing sales. The results showed that the majority of respondents were young farmers aged 21–35 years old who actively used visual platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and WhatsApp Business to market horticultural products, including organic vegetables, fresh fruits, and ornamental plants. This characteristic is in line with the tendency of the younger generation to be adaptive to digital technology and have the ability to build an online market network. The advertising strategies implemented by young farmers focus on organic content, paid advertising, as well as collaborations with micro-influencers. Visual content in the form of harvest photos, educational videos, and consumer testimonials has been proven to increase audience engagement, in accordance with the concept of content marketing that emphasizes the importance of emotional interaction with potential buyers. The use of paid advertising is also effective in expanding market reach, especially with the audience targeting features that Instagram and Facebook have, so that horticultural products can be known outside the production area. The impact of this strategy can be seen from an average increase in sales of 35% for farmers who actively use social media and paid advertising, compared to only 10-15% for farmers who still rely on traditional promotions. These findings reinforce the theory of AIDA and Digital Marketing Performance, which explains that planned digital promotions are able to encourage consumers from the awareness stage to purchase. In addition, the use of social media also plays a role in building the branding of horticultural products which was previously difficult to do through conventional distribution channels. Overall, this study concludes that digital transformation is a strategic step for young farmers in facing the competition of the modern horticultural market. The combination of content creativity, paid advertising utilization, and direct interaction with consumers can significantly increase visibility and sales turnover. The recommendation from these findings is the need for continuous training on digital marketing for young farmers, so that digital transformation can have an optimal impact on the independence and sustainability of horticultural businesses in the digital economy era.

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