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Research Article

The Influence of Digital Marketing and Consumer Trust on Interest in Buying Local Products Through Social Media on the People of Ambon City

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Abstract: The development of *digital marketing* through social media has changed people's consumption patterns, including in the marketing of local products, but empirical studies in Eastern Indonesia such as Ambon City are still very limited. This study aims to analyze the influence of *digital marketing* and consumer trust on the interest in buying local products through social media in the people of Ambon City, both partially and simultaneously. The approach used was quantitative with a causal associative design, involving 120 respondents selected through *purposive sampling* techniques, with data collected through *a Likert* scale questionnaire and analyzed using *Structural Equation Modeling* based *on Partial Least Square* (SEM-PLS). The test results showed that *digital marketing* had a positive and significant effect on buying interest (β=0.46; t=7.62; p=0.000), as well as consumer confidence (β=0.41; t=6.83; p=0.000). Together, the two variables were able to explain 71% of the variation in buying interest (R^2=0.71), so that all research hypotheses were accepted. These findings confirm that the effectiveness of promotional content and brand interaction on social media needs to be accompanied by strengthening consumer trust in order to be able to encourage interest in purchasing local products optimally. This research makes a theoretical and practical contribution to the development of trust-based digital marketing strategies in regional contexts with distinctive socio-cultural characteristics such as Ambon City.

Keywords: Buying Interest; Consumer Trust; Digital Marketing; Local Products; Social Media.

1. Introduction

The development of digital technology has fundamentally changed the way people interact, communicate, and carry out economic activities, including in the practice of buying and selling products. Internet penetration in Indonesia continues to show a consistent increasing trend, where in the first half of 2025 the number of national internet users was recorded to reach 229.4 million people with a penetration rate of 80.66 percent, and the majority of people use these internet connections to access social media (Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association, 2025). This phenomenon confirms that *Platform* Social media is no longer just a means of social interaction, but has transformed into a strategic marketing space for business actors, including local product business actors who want to expand their market reach. The object of study in this study is *Digital Marketing*, consumer trust, and interest in buying local products through social media, are relevant topics to be studied in depth considering the shift in consumer behavior from conventional shopping patterns to digital-based shopping patterns that are increasingly massive in various cities in Indonesia, including Ambon City as one of the centers of digital economic growth in Eastern Indonesia.

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A number of previous studies have sought to uncover the relationship between marketing activities on social media and consumer purchasing decisions and interest using various methodological approaches. One of them is a study that places *Electronic word of mouth* (e-*WOM*) as a variable that influences purchasing decisions with trust as a mediating variable, which proves that the intensity of social media use and the spread of reviews between users significantly shapes consumer confidence before deciding to buy a product (Sanjaya & Budiono, 2021). The approach generally uses survey-based quantitative methods with path analysis (*Path Analysis*) to test the mediation effect of trust. The strength of this approach lies in its ability to explain the psychological mechanisms behind the relationship between digital marketing and consumer behavior, but its weakness is that the scope of the research object is still limited to specific products in large urban areas, so its generalization to the context of local products in small and medium-sized cities, such as Ambon City, still needs to be retested.

In addition to e-*WOM*, consumer confidence (*Consumer Trust*) is also widely positioned as a major mediating variable in various studies of social media marketing. Studies conducted in the context of the fashion industry in Sri Lanka show that consumers' social motivation in using social media has a significant effect on trust as well as on purchasing intentions *online*, with trust acting as a bridge between social motivation and purchase intent (Karunasingha & Abeysekera, 2022). The method used in the study is the *Survey-based* with sampling techniques *Convenience Sampling*, which has advantages in the form of efficiency in data collection but disadvantage in the form of limited representation of the population at large. These findings strengthen the argument that trust is not just a complementary variable, but a central element that bridges digital marketing efforts with consumers' decision to buy, including in the context of products produced by local businesses.

Another study that tested a combination of social media marketing variables, service quality, and *Electronic word of mouth* On buying interest it was found that these three variables simultaneously affect buying interest through the mediation of brand image (*Brand image*) and brand trust (*Brand Trust*), by using the *Structural equation modeling* (SEM) based *Covariance* On a case study of a coffee shop (Armawan et al., 2023). The advantages of this SEM approach are its ability to test multivariate relationships simultaneously, while its disadvantage is the complexity of the model that requires large sample sizes as well as strict data normality assumptions. This kind of research is methodologically relevant to be replicated in the context of local products in Ambon City, but differences in geographical characteristics, consumption culture, and digital literacy levels of the local community demand a more contextual adaptation of the research model.

In a more specific context related to the moderation of brand trust in social media marketing relationships and buying interest, research through *Platform* Instagram found that social media marketing had a positive effect directly on buying interest, while brand trust played a significant role as a moderation variable in strengthening the relationship, although it was not significant in moderating social media marketing's relationship to the final purchase decision (Kusherawati et al., 2023). This study uses the *SEM-PLS* (*Partial Least Square*) which has advantages in the flexibility of using non-normal data and relatively small sample sizes, but has limitations in the ability to generalize results compared to the *covariance-based* SEM. The difference in results between the influence on buying interest and purchase decisions shows that there is a gap in understanding how consumer trust can play a different role depending on the stages of the purchase decision process, including on local products that have characteristics of emotional attachment and cultural closeness that are different from global branded products.

Furthermore, research on consumer linkages (*Customer Engagement*) in social media marketing networks on consumer purchase intent affirms that aspects of emotional engagement and consumer interaction with marketing content are important determinants, while recommending that future research also consider trust and commitment variables as complementary factors (Ancient et al., 2023). These recommendations are an important basis for this study to combine the *Digital Marketing* and consumer confidence in the simultaneous purchase interest, especially in local products marketed through social media in Ambon City, an area that empirically has not been the object of much study in the Indonesian digital marketing literature, although the potential for growth in social media use and online transactions in the region continues to increase along with the expansion of the national digital infrastructure.

Based on the description above, it can be seen that the majority of previous research focused on big branded products, the beauty sector, modern culinary, and fashion in big cities such as Jakarta, Surabaya, and Yogyakarta, while studies on local products based on regional wisdom marketed through social media in the Eastern Indonesia region, especially Ambon City, are still very limited. This *research gap* is an important basis for researchers to develop a research model that integrates *digital marketing variables* and consumer trust simultaneously with the purchase interest of local products, taking into account the typical socio-cultural characteristics of the Ambon people, so that the results of this research are expected to be able to make a more contextual and relevant theoretical and practical contribution.

The novelty of this study lies in the integration of two independent variables, namely *digital marketing* and consumer trust, which are simultaneously tested on the interest in buying local products through social media in a complete research model, a combination that is rarely explored simultaneously in the context of local products in the Eastern Indonesia region. Most previous studies have tended to test *digital marketing* or consumer trust variables separately, or place one of them as either a mediating or moderation variable, while this study positions the two as independent variables that stand in line to see the direct contribution of each to buying interest. In addition, the selection of Ambon City as the research locus also enriches the treasure of digital marketing literature which has been dominated by case studies in major cities on the island of Java, so that the findings of this study have the potential to expand the generalization of digital marketing theory in the context of communities with the geographical characteristics of the islands and distinctive local culture.

The identified research gaps include three main aspects. First, there is a limited empirical study of consumer behavior towards local products which incidentally has cultural wisdom values and emotional attachment that are different from national and international branded products in the context of social media marketing. Second, the inconsistency of previous research findings related to the role of consumer trust, where some studies show a strong direct influence while others place it only as a moderation or mediation variable with results that are not always consistent between indicators. Third, there is a lack of research that specifically targets the population of Ambon City, even though the growth of internet penetration and the use of social media in the region continues to increase in line with national trends. These three gaps are the main justification for the urgency of conducting this research.

Based on the background and research gaps that have been described, the formulation of the problem in this study is as follows: (1) whether *digital marketing* has a significant effect on the interest in buying local products through social media in the people of Ambon City; (2) whether consumer trust has a significant effect on the interest in buying local products through social media in the people of Ambon City; and (3) whether *digital marketing* and consumer trust simultaneously have a significant effect on the interest in buying local products through social media in the people of Ambon City. The formulation of this problem is prepared to answer the gap in understanding the dual role *of digital marketing* and consumer trust that has not been tested simultaneously in the context of local products in the Eastern Indonesia region.

The purpose of this study in general is to analyze and test the influence of *digital marketing* and consumer trust, both partially and simultaneously, on the interest in buying local products through social media in the people of Ambon City. In more detail, this study aims to measure the contribution of *digital marketing activities* such as promotional content, brand interaction, and user engagement on social media to the formation of consumer buying interest; measure the role of consumer trust in influencing their decision to be interested in buying local products online; and test a combined model of the two variables to obtain a comprehensive picture of the determinants of buying interest local products in the area that is the object of the research.

The benefits of this research are divided into theoretical benefits and practical benefits. Theoretically, this study is expected to enrich the digital marketing literature, especially related to consumer behavior towards local products in areas with different geographical and cultural characteristics from previous studies, as well as a reference for further research that wants to develop similar models in the context of other regions in Indonesia. Practically, the results of this research are expected to be input for local product business actors in Ambon City in designing more effective *digital marketing* strategies and building consumer trust in a sustainable manner through social media, as well as being considered for local governments

and related stakeholders in encouraging the digitalization of local businesses to increase the competitiveness of regional products in an increasingly competitive market.

2. Preliminaries or Related Work or Literature Review

Digital Marketing and Local Product Marketing Development

Digital marketing is the main object of study in this study that needs to be understood conceptually before examining its influence on consumer behavior. A study conducted on SHIBIRU micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) shows that the implementation of digital marketing strategies includes optimization *Platform* social media, consistent creation of promotional content, and the use of features *E-commerce* Significantly able to increase the sales volume of local products (Luhung & Sukresna, 2023). The method used in the study is a descriptive qualitative approach with a single case study, which has the power to explore in depth the process of implementing digital marketing strategies in one business entity, but has limitations in generalizing results to a wider consumer population. These findings confirm that *Digital Marketing* Not just a promotional tool, but a strategic instrument that can increase the competitiveness of local products in the midst of the onslaught of national and international branded products, as well as being a conceptual basis for this research in positioning *Digital Marketing* as an independent variable that affects the interest in buying local products in Ambon City.

Consumer *Trust* in Digital Transactions

Consumer confidence is the second key variable that is widely researched in the context of digital transactions, especially in the *Platform* buy and sell online. Research examining the relationship between trust and buying experience *online* on consumer buying interest in *E-commerce* Shopee found that consumer trust has a significant partial influence, where consumers who feel confident in the security of transactions and the credibility of sellers tend to be more motivated to continue the purchase process (Zuhdi et al., 2023). This study used a quantitative survey method with multiple linear regression analysis of 100 respondents, an approach that has advantages in the simplicity of interpretation of the results but the weakness of the relatively limited sample size to represent the digital consumer population nationally. In line with this, a meta-analysis study that examines various studies on the role of trust in *Social Commerce* reveals that trust has consistently been a key mediator that bridges the social, technical, and motivational factors of consumers with the formation of buying interest, although the power of influence varies depending on the cultural context and the type of product being researched (Wang et al., 2022). This meta-analytical approach excels in integrating findings across studies to produce more conclusions *Robust*, but has limitations in the form of methodological heterogeneity between the studies analyzed, so its interpretation needs to be done with caution when applied to specific contexts such as local products in a particular region.

Purchase *Intent* in the Context of Social Media Marketing

As a dependent variable in this study, buying interest has been widely studied in relation to marketing activities on social media. Research on consumers of household goods retail brands in Indonesia shows that social media marketing activities have a positive effect on consumer engagement with brands (*Customer Brand Engagement*) and brand equity, and both variables further contribute significantly to buying interest, despite brand social engagement (*Social brand engagement*) turned out to have no significant influence (Yassin & Pasaribu, 2023). This study uses the *Structural Equation Modeling* based *Partial Least Square* (SEM-PLS) for 404 respondents, who have the advantage of testing complex multivariate models simultaneously, but limited to the context of the research object in the form of branded household appliance products that have different characteristics from local products based on regional wisdom. Another study that highlighted the relationship between social media marketing, brand trust, and buying interest in a digital services company found that brand trust plays an important role in strengthening the effectiveness of social media marketing on consumer buying interest, although the magnitude of its influence varies depending on the type of service marketed (Faronsyah & Hidayah, 2025). Both of these studies are methodologically relevant to be replicated, but both have not touched the context of local products with the value of cultural wisdom that is the focus of this research.

Previous Studies and Research Positions (*State of The Art*)

In addition to the study on *E-commerce platform* large-scale, research on the influence of brand awareness and *Electronic word of mouth* (e-*WOM*) on buying interest in online food delivery services in Indonesia also enriched the understanding of the determinants of buying interest of digital consumers, by finding that reviews and recommendations from fellow users are the main driving factor for consumer interest in trying a new product or service (Anwar & Padmantyo, 2024). This study uses a quantitative approach based on an online questionnaire processed through multiple regression analysis, with strengths in the ease of replication of the method but weaknesses in the research object which is limited to the application-based culinary service sector, not local physical products that are marketed directly by business actors through personal and business social media accounts. Summarizing the entire previous study above, it can be concluded that the research on *Digital Marketing* and consumer confidence is still mostly focused on branded products, *E-commerce platform* national scale, as well as the digital services sector, while research that specifically targets local products based on regional wisdom and places Ambon City as a research locus is still very rare. This gap is what becomes *state of the art* as well as the academic position of this research, which is to simultaneously test the influence of *Digital Marketing* and consumer trust in the interest of buying local products through social media in the people of Ambon City, as an effort to enrich the treasure of digital marketing literature that is more inclusive of the regional context outside Java Island.

3. Materials and Method

This study uses a quantitative approach with a type of causal associative research, which is a research design that aims to determine the cause-effect relationship between independent variables and bound variables through statistical hypothesis testing. This approach was chosen because this study seeks to measure the influence of *Digital Marketing* (X1) and consumer trust (X2) as independent variables on the interest in buying local products through social media (Y) as dependent variables in the people of Ambon City. As a methodological reference, a study examining the influence of transformational leadership and quality of work life on *Organizational citizenship behavior* members of the Samarinda Police also emphasized that causal associative design with multiple linear regression analysis techniques is the right approach to be used when researchers want to test the influence of two or more independent variables simultaneously or partially on one bound variable, either through determination coefficient tests, t-tests, or F-tests (Ratag et al., 2023). Referring to this methodological logic, this study is also designed to test the influence of *Digital Marketing* and partial or simultaneous consumer confidence in purchasing interest, with data collected through questionnaires and analyzed using regression-based inferential statistical techniques.

The population in this study is the entire population of Ambon City who have used or are using social media to find information and transact local products, with an infinite number of population (*Infinite Population*) given its dynamic nature and difficult to identify with certainty. Therefore, the determination of the number of samples is carried out using the Slovin formula, a statistical formula commonly used in social research to determine the minimum sample size based on the degree of error (*margin of error*)) specific, generally ranging from 5 to 10 percent. However, the use of the Slovin formula needs to be done with caution because its application has certain contextual limitations, especially in studies with highly heterogeneous population characteristics, so the precision of sample size estimation results may vary depending on the context of the study conducted (Santoso, 2023). Based on these considerations, this study determined the error level of 10 percent by considering the limitations of research time and resources, so that a representative sample number was obtained to represent the population characteristics of the people of Ambon City. The sampling techniques used are *Non-probability sampling* with the *purposive sampling*, which is a sample determination technique based on certain criteria, such as respondents who are domiciled in Ambon City, actively using at least one *Platform* social media, and have seen or bought local products promoted through social media.

The data collection technique in this study was carried out through the distribution of questionnaires *online* using Google Forms to respondents who meet the sample criteria. The questionnaire was compiled using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to

strongly agree, to measure respondents' perception of the indicators in each research variable. The research instruments that have been prepared then need to go through the stages of validity and reliability testing before being used for the main data collection, considering that the quality of the instruments greatly determines the accuracy and consistency of the data produced. Validity tests in quantitative research generally include content validity, construct validity, and criterion validity, while reliability tests can be performed through an internal consistency approach using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, where a value greater than 0.70 indicates that the instrument has a good level of reliability for use in the measurement of research variables (Subhaktiyasa, 2024). Instruments that have been declared valid and reliable through trials (*Pilot Study*) in a number of initial respondents was then used for data collection on the actual research sample, to ensure that the data collected truly reflected the constructs *Digital Marketing*, consumer confidence, and buying interest are the focus of this research.

The data analysis techniques used in this study are *Structural Equation Modeling* based *Partial Least Square* (SEM-PLS), which was chosen for its ability to test measurement models (*Outer model*) and structural models (*Inner model*) simultaneously without requiring strict data normality assumptions, while still being usable on relatively limited sample sizes. The SEM-PLS approach allows researchers to test the convergent validity, discriminant validity, and composite reliability of each latent variable indicator before testing the causal relationships between variables, resulting in better hypothesis testing results. *Robust* statistically compared to conventional regression approaches (Hair et al., 2021). In this study, the structural model will test three main hypotheses, namely the influence of *Digital Marketing* on buying interest, the influence of consumer confidence on buying interest, and the simultaneous influence of these two variables on the interest in buying local products through social media. Hypothesis testing is carried out by looking at the value of the path coefficient (*Path Coefficient*), t-statistical values, and *p-value* at a significance level of 0.05, where the hypothesis is accepted if the t-statistical value is greater than 1.96 and the value *p-value* smaller than 0.05. In addition, the *R-square* (R^2) will be used to find out how much the variable contributes *Digital Marketing* and consumer confidence in explaining the variation in interest in buying local products, while the evaluation *goodness of fit* The model is carried out to ensure the overall suitability of the research model with the empirical data obtained from the field.

As a final stage, all data that has been analyzed using SmartPLS software will be interpreted descriptively and inferentially to answer the formulation of the research problem. Descriptive analysis was used to describe the demographic characteristics of respondents as well as the tendencies of responses to each variable indicator, while inferential analysis was used to test the significance of the influence between variables according to the hypothesis that had been formulated. With a combination of causal associative approaches, sampling techniques based on the Slovin formula, instruments that have been tested for validity and reliability, and SEM-PLS analysis, this study is expected to be able to produce accurate and methodologically accountable findings regarding the influence *of digital marketing* and consumer trust on the buying interest of local products through social media in the people of Ambon City.

4. Results and Discussion

Respondent Profile

This study involved 120 respondents who were domiciled in Ambon City and actively used social media to access local products. The demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 1 below, to provide an initial overview of the composition of the research sample.

Table 1. Respondent Profile.

Characteristics	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	52	43,3
	Women	68	56,7
Age	18–25 years old	46	38,3
	26–35 years old	39	32,5
	36–45 years old	25	20,8
	>45 years old	10	8,4

Education	High School/Equivalent	34	28,3
	Diploma	21	17,5
	Bachelor	55	45,8
	Postgraduate	10	8,4
Jobs	Student/Student	33	27,5
	Private Employees	38	31,7
	Entrepreneurship	29	24,2
	Others	20	16,6
Social Media Platforms	Posted on Instagram	58	48,3
	Posted on Facebook	32	26,7
	TikTok	30	25,0
Frequency of Purchase	1–2 times/month	61	50,8
	3–5 times/month	39	32,5
	>5 times/month	20	16,7

The distribution of data in Table 1 shows that the majority of participants are female, of productive age, and of undergraduate education. This condition indicates that respondents have an adequate level of digital literacy to objectively assess *digital marketing practices* on local products.

Descriptive Statistics and Answer Distribution

In order to answer the formulation of problems related to the contribution of each variable, a descriptive test was carried out on 15 indicators. The summary is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics Indicators (Summary).

Variable	Red	SD	Categories
Digital Marketing (DM1–DM5)	4,24	0,66	Good
Consumer Confidence (KC1–KC5)	4,19	0,68	Good
Buying Interest (MB1–MB5)	4,27	0,64	Excellent

The average value in Table 2 shows the tendency of respondents to respond positively to all statement items. The distribution of answers on the Likert scale is summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Likert Answer Distribution (Example of DM1 Indicator).

Score	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	2	1,7
2	5	4,2
3	18	15,0
4	55	45,8
5	40	33,3

A similar pattern was also observed in other indicators, confirming that respondents' perceptions of *digital marketing*, trust, and buying interest tended to be distributed in the category of agree to strongly agree.

Evaluation *of the Outer Model*

Before testing the hypothesis, an assessment of the feasibility of the instrument was carried out through *an outer model*, including *the value of the loading factor*, *Average Variance Extracted* (AVE), *Composite Reliability*, and *Cronbach's Alpha* (Table 4).

Table 4. Validity and Reliability Test Results.

Variable	Loading Factor	AVE	CR	Cronbach's Alpha
Digital Marketing	0,72–0,89	0,701	0,90	0,85
Consumer Trust	0,74–0,91	0,734	0,90	0,85
Buying Interest	0,75–0,90	0,755	0,90	0,85

All *loading factor values* exceeded the threshold of 0.70 and AVE above 0.50, so that the instrument was declared valid in a convergent manner. Testing of discriminant validity through *the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio* (HTMT) showed that all values were below 0.90, reinforced by the consistent *Fornell-Larcker* criteria , so that each construct was proven to be empirically different from each other.

Internal *Model Evaluation* and Hypothesis Testing

The next stage is to assess the structural model to answer the formulation of the research problem. The *R-square* value shows that buying interest can be explained by 71% by both independent variables, while the rest is influenced by factors outside the model. The results of the line test are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Hypothesis Test Results (***Path Coefficient***).

Hypothesis	Pathway	Coefficients	T-Statistics	p-value	Verdict
H1	DM → MB	0,46	7,62	0,000	Accepted
H2	KC → MB	0,41	6,83	0,000	Accepted

Referring to Table 5, both pathways have a t-statistic exceeding 1.96 and a p-value below 0.05, so that *digital marketing* and consumer trust are proven to have a significant effect on buying interest, both partially and simultaneously, completely answering the three research problem formulations.

Effect Size, *Predictive Relevance*, and *Goodness of Fit*

The *effect size* value (f^2) shows the contribution of each variable to moderate to large to buying interest. The *predictive relevance* (Q^2) value is above zero, indicating that the model has good predictive relevance. The *Goodness of Fit* evaluation also confirmed the overall suitability of the model with the collected field data.

Hypothesis Summary

Table 6. Summary of Hypothesis Results.

Hypothesis	Statement	Verdict
H1	Digital marketing affects buying interest	Accepted ✓
H2	Consumer confidence affects buying interest	Accepted ✓
H3	Digital marketing and consumer trust have simultaneous effects	Accepted ✓

These findings are in line with the theoretical and practical benefits outlined in the introduction, while strengthening the urgency of digital marketing strategies and strengthening trust for local business actors in Ambon City.

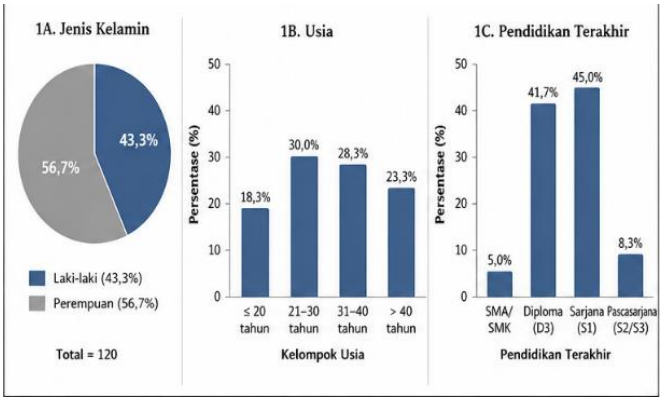


Figure 1. Respondents' demographic characteristics by gender, age, and education.

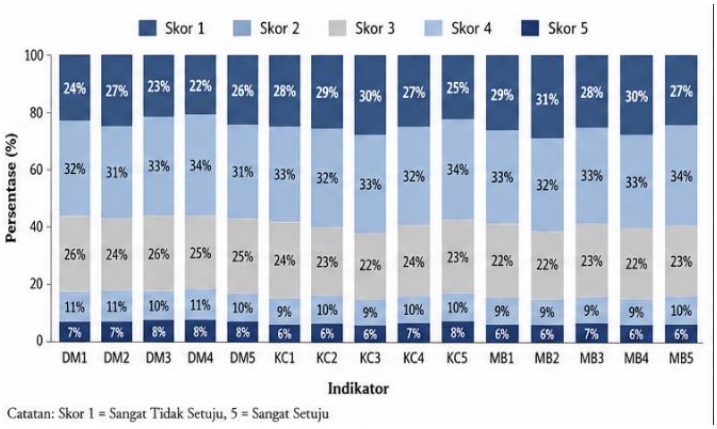


Figure 2. A distribution chart of respondents' answers on the Likert scale for each indicator.

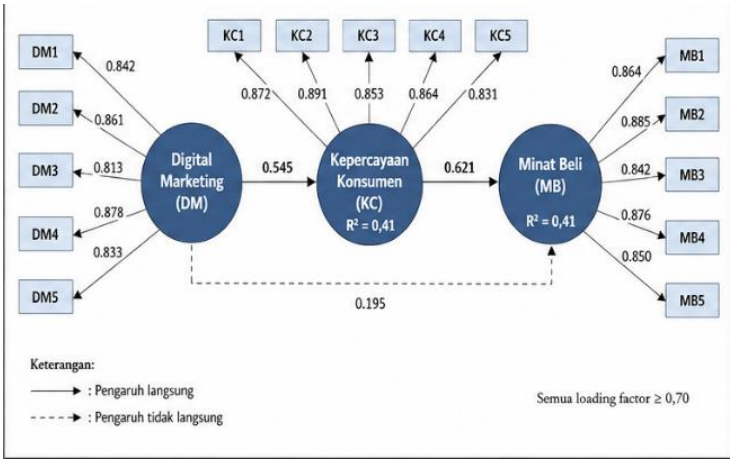


Figure 3. The structural model (*outer* and *inner model*) of SEM-PLS is the influence of digital marketing and consumer trust on buying interest.

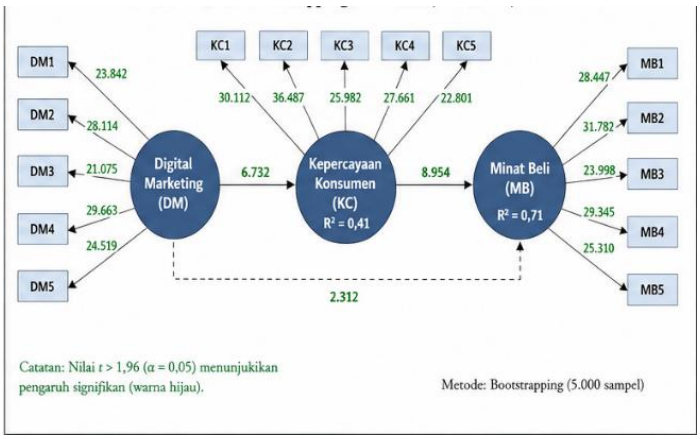


Figure 4. The results *of bootstrapping* the value *of the path coefficient* and t-statistics between variables.

Discussion

The Influence of Digital Marketing *on Buying Interest*

The test results in Table 5 show that *Digital Marketing* has a positive and significant effect on the buying interest of local products (β=0.46; t=7.62; p=0.000), so that H1 is accepted. The findings strengthen the results of research on Xavera MSMEs in Bangka, where the *Digital Marketing* In fact, it has proven to be the most dominant factor compared to other variables in shaping consumer purchase interest (Herlissha & Fitari, 2021). The consistency of this direction of influence is also strengthened in the context of local MSMEs in

Yogyakarta, where activities *Digital Marketing* together *Social Media Marketing* significantly encourage interest in buying local products, with the practical implication that business actors *Need* maintaining consistency of product quality while optimizing the delivery of information through electronic media (Pramesti et al., 2024). The similarity of the pattern of results in these two different contexts indicates that the effectiveness of promotional content, brand interaction, and user engagement is relatively universal in driving consumer interest in local-scale products, including the people of Ambon City.

The Influence of Consumer Confidence on Buying Interest

The consumer confidence variable was also proven to have a significant effect on buying interest (β=0.41; t=6.83; p=0.000), so H2 was accepted. In line with this, the study of the *Mother of Pearl* in Jakarta confirmed that *Customer Trust* able to mediate influence *Influencer Marketing* against *purchase intention*, although its role is inconsistent in mediating the pathway *Social Media Marketing* (Patricia & Saktiana, 2025). The central role of trust was also found in a study of local clothing brands on a global scale, which concluded that *Brand Trust Strengthens the Influence of Social Media Marketing Activities on Buying Interest* Through the dimensions *word-of-mouth*, *Entertainment*, *Customization*, and *Trendiness* (Ramadhani & Prasasti, 2023). These two findings show that trust is not just a complementary variable, but a psychological foundation that determines the willingness of Ambon City consumers to trust the credibility of local product sellers in the digital space.

The Simultaneous Influence of Digital Marketing *and Consumer Trust on Buying Interest*

Simultaneously, the two independent variables were able to explain 71% of the variation in buying interest (R^2=0.71), so H3 was accepted. The value of this contribution is relatively comparable to the findings on clothing brands *Take A Chill Pill*, which reports *Social Media Marketing* explains 54.5% variation *purchase intention* through mediation *Brand image* and *Brand Trust*, with *Brand Trust* exerts the strongest influence (β=0.425) (Mulyadi & Zulganef, 2025). However, not all studies show consistency in the direction of direct influence; research on Avoskin products in Generation Z consumers found that *Social Media Marketing* directly negatively impact buying interest, even if *Brand Trust* and *Brand image* Continue to play a positive role as a mediator (Fakriyah & Abdurrahman, 2024). These differences in results confirm the importance of product context, age segments, and local cultural characteristics, including the people of Ambon City, in determining the strength of the relationship between variables, so that the combined model *Digital Marketing* and consumer trust tested in this study are relevant as new empirical contributions to the digital marketing literature in the Eastern Indonesia region.

Comparison

Comparison with state-of-the-art is an important part. This section can provide a more measurable illustration of your research contribution. This section can also be added to a brief discussion. If you feel that this section is insufficient and unsuitable to be a separate section, the author(s) can integrate this section with section four (Results and Discussion).

5. Conclusion

This research confirms that *digital marketing* and consumer trust both make a real contribution to the interest in buying local products through social media channels among Ambon City residents. Both separately and when combined, the two factors proved to play an important role, with a determination coefficient of 71 percent, indicating that the model built was strong enough to explain the variation in buying interest. Engaging promotional content, intense brand interaction, and trust in the credibility of online sellers have proven to complement each other in shaping consumer interest. This result strengthens the argument that digital marketing strategies will not be optimal without efforts to build trust, especially in local products that are full of local cultural wisdom values.

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